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Kenneth Baker got a wonderful party political broadcast out of *Weekend World* last Sunday. Not only was the strong message of the introductory film that education in this country was in a terrible mess and that fortunately we now had the man to put it right, but practically every question put to him was a variant of "Wouldn't it be true to say that your ideas are the most exciting thing that has happened since 1944?" To which he was able to demur modestly (but without much conviction) and make gracious remarks about his predecessor. Politicians always grind their teeth when their opponents get this sort of luck, but I think even a dispassionate viewer would have found the sycophancy of the interviewer, Matthew Parris, excessive.

The programme would have been very much more enlightening if a rather more rigorous line of questioning had been developed. For instance:

Mr Baker, let me ask you this: if education really is in such a mess, whose fault is it? Hasn't your party been in power for seven and a half years now, and isn't it true that all the opinion polls indicate that the longer you have had to put it right, the more worried the public has become and the less they trust the Tories on educational issues?

There are two answers that Mr Baker might have given to this. First, he would



ANNE SOFER

## Lightly grilled

'Mr Baker, let me ask you this: if education really is in such a mess, whose fault is it?'

have passed the blame on to the local education authorities - the law binds the Secretary of State's hands, you see, and when you are dealing with authorities like Brent and Haringey... Well, with every day that passes the excesses of those benighted boroughs make this line of argument easier, but on the whole the public doesn't like buck-passing. And anyway, impotence is the last quality Mr Baker wants to allow anywhere near himself.

So I think it likely he would have used the second defence, and indeed he hinted at it in his remarks. The sort of change he and the Conservative Party had in mind (he would have said) would take decades. Sir Keith had made a start, but since the damage was deep-rooted in mistakes made by other parties, it would take some time to turn around... The only possible consolation to be derived from the prospect of a third Conservative term is that this sort of argument will become increasingly less convincing.

Another question: But Mr Baker, are parents and the public right to be worried about education? Are the schools really failing our children? Are standards in fact falling?

Now I genuinely do not know what answer Mr Baker would give to this. What does he want the public to think? That standards are falling or not?

A recently published set of figures from the Department of Education and Science gets as near as it is possible to get to the facts. *Statistics of Education School Leavers: CSE and GCE 1985* is a compilation of many detailed tables of some interest in the current debate. It has not been widely publicized. Indeed, with its cheap typed format, too small print and dusty blue cardboard cover, it looks rather more like an internal document produced by a school suffering from slashed capitulation levels than a national record of some importance.

Conclusions have to be dragged out of this document with a pencil and a pocket calculator - they are not summarized in any digestible way. But the results of my own calculations, based on Table C21: Estimated output of school-leavers with specified qualifications, are as follows.

Between 1978 and 1985 the proportion of school leavers with at least one A level rose from 16 per cent to 17 per cent; the proportion of school leavers with at least five O levels rose from 24 per cent to 27 per cent; and the proportion of school leavers with no qualifications at all fell from 14 per cent to 9 per cent. In other words during these years of ministerial denunciation of the schools, widespread demoralization and plummeting public confidence, results have actually been continuing the very slow but steady improvement that has been manifest for 15 or

more years.

Mr Baker apparently doesn't want to shout about it - that would undermine his argument for radical change. If what we want is an accelerated improvement rate, and we most certainly desperately need the odd word of encouragement would come amiss.

And the third question: Mr Baker, there an inconsistency in what you are saying? On the one hand you are talking about a national curriculum - and your predecessor Sir Keith Joseph went some way towards spelling that out in *Better Schools* but on the other hand you are promoting an idea of different sorts of curriculum for different sorts of children. The recommended curriculum of your new City Technology Colleges, for instance, is pretty thin on the arts and humanities. And you are talking about TVEI is something special for the "bottom per cent". Aren't we supposed to be teaching technology to all abilities?

To which the honest answer would have been: I am not bothered about consistency one bit. What I need here is some image to catch the public's attention and convince them I'm doing something - that I'm the one to trust with education rather than those whinging teachers and barmy Labour councillors. If a hint (only a hint, mind) of a return to a selective system is the way to do it, then why not?

He wouldn't have said it, of course. But it would have been fun to listen to his elegant prevarication. He does it so well.

### NEXT WEEK

Christmas Past  
Neil Philip on Dickens and the ragged schools

Songs, rhymes and stories  
Listening tapes for children

Peace on Earth  
The film that won the UN Peace Prize  
Voice school  
Sue Surkes visits a Somerset project aimed at improving children's literacy skills

# Educational Supplement

## 40% increase in serious school fires Arson damage costs soar as attacks hit record level

by Howard Sharron

Arson in Britain's schools is reaching proportions with both the number and the size of school fires increasing each year.

The leap in number of malicious school fires began in 1984 - although even before then, damage each year was running into millions of pounds. In 1981 there were 499 deliberate attacks costing £9 million. By 1984 the figure had shot up to 673, causing damage of £12.8 million.

At the end of September this year there had been 446 malicious school fires in England and Wales costing £12.4 million. Of these, 19 attacks caused damage of more than £250,000 each, with a grand total of £10 million.

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## Baker stops action over McGoldrick

by Diane Spencer

Mr Kenneth Baker, the Education Secretary, has ordered Brent education authority not to take any further disciplinary action against Miss Maureen McGoldrick, the head at the centre of the race row in the north London borough.

The directive has been issued by Mr Baker under Section 68 of the 1944 Education Act.

A letter from Mr Baker to Brent says that "no reasonable authority, having regard to all the circumstances of the case, would decide to impose any further disciplinary penalty on Miss McGoldrick even if the allegation against her were to be substantiated".

He said: "I reach this decision only after the most careful consideration of all the information which Brent council gave me about the facts of the case, their allegations against Miss McGoldrick and their intentions."

He said that seven letters had been exchanged between his department and the council since September 9.

Under Section 68, the Education Secretary has the power to prevent a local education authority from acting if he considers they are behaving unreasonably.

Ms Marie Amory, leader of Brent council, immediately accused Mr Baker of "interfering in local government".

As the TES went to press, the authority was taking legal advice as to its best course of action.

Mr Baker's intervention came the day after Miss McGoldrick's union, the National Union of Teachers, was granted a High Court injunction preventing the council from holding a disciplinary hearing on Wednesday.

Mr Justice Webster had given her leave to apply for a judicial review into the decision by the borough's authority to continue action against her. He had also granted an interlocutory injunction to prevent Brent from going ahead until the outcome of the review was known.

Mr Fred Jarvis, the general secretary of the NUT, welcomed the Education Secretary's intervention.

He pledged that the union would immediately withdraw its legal action, and added: "I'm only sorry it's taken Mr Baker so long to act."

Miss McGoldrick was suspended last July after she was alleged to have said to a council official that she did not want any more black teachers in her school, Sudbury Infants.

She has consistently denied the allegation and has received support from her governors, parents and other Brent teachers.

At the end of August, the governors ruled that she was not guilty and recommended to the council that she should return to her post. Instead, Brent decided to hold a disciplinary hearing.

The Court of Appeal, under the Master of the Rolls, Sir John Donaldson, ruled in November that Brent was right, on the construction of the law, to proceed with its disciplinary action. But he said: "I cannot believe the authority will proceed further."

Chain gang: 28 girls from St Paul's Girls' School in Hammersmith, West London, are claiming a new world record - for making a 224-metre paper chain in 45 minutes. Researchers from the *Guinness Book of Records* are checking the claim. The girls have raised more than £500 which they plan to give to Aids research. The chain is shortly to be moved to a local hospital as Christmas decoration.

## Cut-price Domesday offer from Minister

Local education authorities who want to buy the BBC's Domesday equipment will receive a £1,500 Government subsidy.

Mr John Butcher, the industry junior minister, says the offer indicates the educational importance attached to interactive video systems - which integrate pupils' responses to programmes as they run.

This one-off subsidy could be in addition to the £200 educational software rebate already available from the department.

Vouchers will be offered to 122 L.E.A.s, one per authority, this week. To claim the £1,500, the L.E.A.s must return both voucher and invoice from Domesday equipment. They must move quickly to claim their discounts as the offer closes on March 10.

The new grant would reduce the price of the Acorn system from £3,990 to £2,490 (plus VAT). It is separate from the £800 price reduction that Philips, Acorn and the distributors are jointly making available to schools.

However, there is nothing to prevent an L.E.A. from claiming the DTT rebate on a system which has already received the £800 price reduction. If received the £800 price reduction, using all three forms of price reduction, the Acorn system quoted at £3,990 could be presented as costing £1,490. The RML Domesday price starts at £4,495, but its schools price is £3,445. This could also qualify for the £200 software subsidy and £1,500 rebate, leaving a bottom line of £1,745.

Although fires are an alarming problem, the whole question of vandalism in schools is much bigger. He estimated that damage caused by school break-ins was probably much higher than that from arson.

Part of the explanation for the rise in the number of malicious fires could be because fire brigade instructors are now much better at finding the cause of fires, said Mr Cichy. But there was still a disturbing general increase.

Mr George Cichy, assistant fire manager of Municipal Mutual Insurance, which insures buildings in 90 per cent of local authorities, said his company was so concerned that it had sent notices to authorities warning them of the dramatic increase in the number and size of fires.

He added that the millions of pounds in damage excluded smaller policies' excess payments, and the costs of providing portakabins or busking children to other schools while damage was repaired.

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### NOTICEBOARD

#### PEOPLE...

Mr Richard Bunker, director of education for West Sussex, has been appointed chairman of the Assessment of Performance Unit consultative committee.

Professor Derek Embrey, technical director of AB Electronic Products and visiting industrial professor at Loughborough University, to be chairman of the Wales Advisory Body for Local Authority Higher Education.

Miss Rosemary May, senior assistant education officer (secondary and welfare) in the London borough of Islington, to be divisional education officer for the Inner London Education Authority's Hackney Division 4.

Mr Robert Emery, head of the department of business studies, Central Manchester College, to be senior adviser, further and higher education, London borough of Bexley.

Mr Stuart Payne, deputy head of De Beauvoir junior school, north London, to be head of St Paul's with St Michael's C of E junior school, east London.

Miss Val Prince, deputy head of The Priory C of E primary school, Churchchurch, to be head of Summerbee junior school, Bournemouth.

Miss Enid Castle, head of Red Maids' school, Bristol, to be principal of Cheltenham Ladies' College from next September.

#### CONFERENCES...

December 15  
New technology - a bridge to the future: a seminar organized jointly

by the polytechnics of Leicester and Trent and the universities of Nottingham, Leicester and Loughborough for East Midlands Industrialists at Loughborough University of Technology. Details from Professor R Bell, Professor of Manufacturing Technology, Loughborough University, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 3TU.

January 27  
Local area networks in training and education conference organized by Brighton Polytechnic at the Galwick Hilton International Hotel. Speakers include Scott Currie, Forbes Gibb, Chris Box and Chris Humphries. Details from Harriett Mason, Information Technology Conference, Short Courses Centre, Robert Dodd House, 49 Dangleway Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN20 7UR.

January 5-9  
Planning for 16-19 provision - Further Education Staff College course for heads of departments and those involved in 16-19 curriculum provision. Fee £150. Details from The Registrar, FEBC, Blandford, B518 6RG.

January 5-8 and 23-25  
Two courses organized by Castle Priory College, the first on the young child with a visual disability and the second on working with the pre-school child with special needs. Details from the college, Thames Street, Wallingford, Oxfordshire OX10 0HE.

January 12  
Video for education in marital

health: a workshop to study the uses of video in mental health education organized by the Mental Health Film Council and the Open University at the Open University (London Region), Fensall College, 527 Finchley Road, London NW3. Fee £19.55. Details from the MHFC, 380-384 Harrow Road, London W9 2HU.

January 21-24  
High technology and equipment in education conference at the Barbican Centre, London EC2. Sponsored by the British Association of Educational Computing. The conference will divide into five main themes: training and employment, policy and planning, management and technology, teaching and technology, and special needs. Details from Christine Smith, EMAP, Abchurch Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

#### COURSES...

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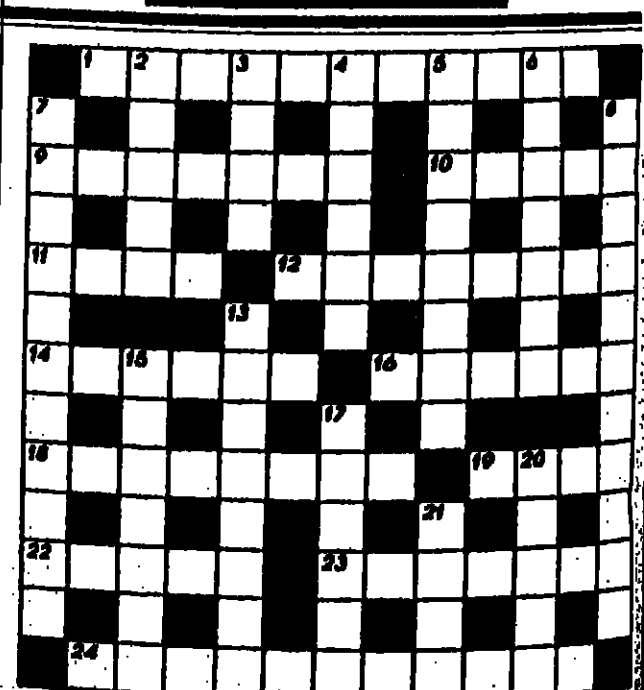
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#### EVENTS...

December 13 and 20  
Christmas events at the Gellie Museum are based on the carol. Twelve Days of Christmas and preparing for an entertainment in

### No 284 CROSSWORD by Rufus



Across  
1 A tailor may make his mark with it (6,5)  
9 Say, maybe! gets a plant (7)  
10 It may be closed to him, perhaps (5)  
11 Telephone and give a name (4)  
12 Record as deliberate (6)  
14 A clue to argue (6)  
16 Travel at full speed and overseas (6)  
18 Old tale, staged at Christmas? (8)  
19 Point-to-point training establishment (10)  
21 Fortune from the Orient (5)  
24 New (5)  
25 Precise (5)  
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Down  
2 Best and precise form of epithet (4,2,5)  
3 African currency (4)  
4 Ambassador meets a fellow - and how! (4-2)  
5 Missing persons in the family? (8)  
6 Clean up in Arundel, perhaps (7)  
7 Deeper, current problems (11)  
8 Unable to span the production schedule? (5,6)  
9 Holding soldiers up in a unit is a blunder? (7)  
10 It may be pressed down, but not up (10)  
11 Garment unusual in cut (5)  
12 We hold a note for payment (4)  
13 Holding soldiers up in a unit is a blunder? (7)  
14 It may be pressed down, but not up (10)  
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THIS WEEK  
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Are you sitting comfortably? 24



## Mr Baker's Bill won't do

Mr Baker's Bill completed its headlong passage through the Commons on Wednesday night and Thursday of last week and now there is nothing but the House of Lords between it and the Statute Book. There are two quite distinct issues: the first concerns the possible imposition of Mr Baker's preferred pay scales instead of those negotiated under the Acas aegis; the second relates to the future method of settling teachers' salaries.

The signs are that everybody — teachers, employers and the Secretary of State — would still prefer to negotiate some compromise deal which would enable the 1986-87 settlement to be introduced by agreement rather than decree. Compromise is, of course, a euphemism in the circumstance: the Education Secretary is holding a pistol to the teachers' heads and they are going to have to go a good deal further to meet him than he to meet them. But this said, it is still hugely to his advantage to get their consent to a deal and thus minimize the danger of renewed teacher action in the Easter term.

If, then, there is some reason to believe that a deal could be struck on pay, what about the other matter — what to put in place of the Burnham Committee? Here, too, it would be a mistake to see everything as cut and dried. There is still time, as the Prayer Book puts it, for amendment. The Upper Chamber is sure to take a hard look at Mr Baker's pretensions. Their Lordships are bound to wonder what it is about teachers which makes it peculiarly impossible to allow them to engage in collective bargaining.

True, there are others similarly disinclined, such as the staff of the secret signals establishment, GCHQ at Cheltenham, or the Armed Forces, but in their case the ban on bargaining is justified on the grounds of national defence, and in the particular case of service men and women there is the protection of an independent review body. The Peers' libertarian instincts will have been strangely

dimmed if they think it proper to strip teachers of all their negotiating rights so that they cannot treat with their employers on pay either through their unions, or individually. It is on the face of it, an oppressive and preposterous suggestion, one totally unjustified by past history, and one which on any reading of recent experience would have led to the teachers being even worse paid than they now are.

The Government has had six years and more in which to decide how to reform Burnham. Six years ago Mr Mark Carlisle, the then Secretary of State, was committed to a new formula, bringing pay and conditions together. It was Sir Keith Joseph who ostentatiously scrapped the idea. If there is a need to move in haste now it is simply the result of a lack of forethought — or else a desire to manufacture a spurious sense of crisis to justify the draconian measure which the Treasury insisted on tying to the increased pay offer.

The local authorities and the teachers have put forward a proposal for a National Joint Council on the lines of other public service negotiations, but with the important difference that some involvement on the part of the DES is envisaged but not spelled out. The key to this proposal is the teachers' acceptance (at last) of putting pay and conditions together. But it leaves open a number of questions.

Within the total of more than 400,000 teachers, there are important minority sub-groups like heads and senior teachers whose interests the unions which represent the rank and file are naturally prone to neglect. Perhaps teachers' salary negotiations need to be broken up into more manageable bits.

Mr Baker has been determined to lay all the blame for the failures of the past three years on the teachers' unions which is palpably unfair (if politically astute) because the main stumbling block has been money, as everyone including Mr Baker knows. But the fact remains that the fiction that the teachers are a single group — which might have meant something if there

had been a strong and unifying commitment to the professional nature of teaching as an occupation — has become less and less easy to sustain in the face of a rising tide of union activism which has negated the professional idea. Teachers have been goaded into unprofessional ways. The contract is one result. Any temporary improvement it yields will be offset later by a further decline in professional behaviour.

So in looking for alternatives to Mr Baker's potentially tyrannical direct rule, a genuinely independent review body looks like the easiest for their Lordships. The Secretary of State would have to be given some sort of modified veto. Other review bodies are only advisory, but the moral pressure they exert limits the power of ministers to set their recommendations aside. This must have been considered and rejected in Cabinet Committee. Perhaps the House of Lords will force the Government to consider it once more.

The other alternatives are more radical — like abolishing national salary negotiations and letting each i.e.a. negotiate separately with its own teachers or simply repealing the existing legislation without putting anything in its place.

Ideologically, either of these would be closer to the Government's long-term aims than the present Bill, which, ominously, only aspires to be an interim solution. If the interim solution is unacceptable, however, it would be better to know where it is leading now, rather than later.

The proposals in the Bill betray a contempt for the teachers which is far more damaging than anything else. They spring from the arrogance which now rules in high places. Far from being a formula which will bring peace in place of strife this will, at best, browbeat the teachers into submission. At worst it will open up the prospect of yet more disruption. It would be foolish to give the Secretary of State — of any party, not just the party now in power — such sweeping powers and expect him not to abuse them.

## Second opinion Not Invented Here — but working well

In pointing out the structural problems for Youth Training Schemes in areas of high unemployment, Mr Mike Nichol of the Microelectronics Support Unit has a point (*School to Work*, TES, December 5). It is a point that is savagely clear to teachers, parents and pupils within secondary education as well, not just in the Wirral but across Western Europe. But to rubbish information technology centres by assertion to support this view just will not do and, from a director of education, looks suspiciously like the NIH syndrome.

When ITeCs were launched in 1981, they were never intended to be just for "socially deprived youngsters". The massive input from the Department of Trade and Industry, companies and many local authorities was targeted on a multidisciplinary organization that could deliver flexibly to youth, adults, the local community and special needs as well as attempt to create small business ventures that might employ people. This was very much in response to the clear labour market and technological trends that schools in general are only just beginning to grapple with.

Part of this response embraced the notion of information technology as a burgeoning and generic area of skill and knowledge. To describe ITeCs in general as "degenerating into glorified secretarial colleges" is about as accurate as describing most schools as academies for origami.

The curriculum across the ITeC programme embraces electronics, robotics, maintenance, computer aided design, programming, software applications, Worddata, computer graphics, desktop publishing, telecoms and, yes, word processing.

It is from this background that the City and Guilds 726 was developed and made available to education in general. Equally, the European-funded Training Materials Network (an exemplar in Europe) and the Transport Based Learning Vehicle development both originate from the needs and aspirations of the ITeC programme. Major collaborations with Germany and France in microelectronics further indicate how wrong the "glorified secretarial college" description is.

When it comes to effectiveness, our figures for the national programme show a very high rate of job placement from ITeCs for young people. Given the well-rehearsed skills shortage at "silicon technician" level and the equally well-rehearsed dilatoriness of British firms in taking up IT, I would suggest that there will be a demand for some time to come for young people with good, transferable skills in information technology. Equally, there will be a continuing demand for conversion and access training for adults.

When I think of the ITeCs that are political control. The ITeC has been paralysed by indecision for most of this year because it is finally coming up against budget realities. There is no credit to be had from neglecting decision-making at the school level as well, and on this record it richly deserves to lose political control of governors when the 1986 Act is in force next time round.

The ILEA has been paralysed by indecision for most of this year because it is finally coming up against budget realities. There is no credit to be had from neglecting decision-making at the school level as well, and on this record it richly deserves to lose political control of governors when the 1986 Act is in force next time round.

Consortia, individual institutions and i.e.a.s have co-operated well over curriculum planning and staff development, but what about progression? The time is now ripe — perhaps overdue — for i.e.a.s to designate responsibility for progression policy for CPVE. In particular, progression into YTS and into unemployment require local attention.

From Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education October bulletin, published by the Further Education Unit.

Chris Webb

Chris Webb is director of the ITeC Consortium Unit.

The teachers' pay dispute seems set to continue into the New Year. James Meikle reports on the latest attempt at compromise and Geraldine Hackett previews the House of Lords debate on the controversial Bill

## Employers look for a compromise

Local authority employers will put a revised career ladder to teachers at a meeting today as they inch closer to the Government's restructuring demands. The proposals will involve at least a new third tier of Principal Teacher posts to strengthen management in schools but the Education Secretary is likely to demand a minimum of four steps on the ladder of responsibility below heads and deputies.

The employers are also expected to suggest delaying the start of their two-stage pay rise over the next 15 months, from January to February, in order to come within the £88 million cash limit fixed by the Government up to 1988.

But longer-term costs will still exceed those of the Government's proposals.

Two of the six teacher organizations will also be tabling suggested changes. The National Association of Head Teachers is proposing three Principal Teacher allowances and extra money for heads and deputies while the Professional Association of Teachers is suggesting four levels of responsibility allowance.

Both employers and teachers are juggling their lobbying of politicians in an attempt to head off an imposed pay and conditions package giving five tiers of responsibility and a much lower maximum salary for the ordinary classroom teacher (£10,000 a year against the £15,058 envisaged under the negotiated agreement at Acas last month).

The House of Lords is to debate the Education Bill, which would also end negotiating machinery for teachers, on January 12.



John Pearman: does not want to alter Main Professional Grade levels

The Labour-led employers hope changes can be agreed today that will make their package more attractive to teachers and put extra pressure on the Government and peers to alter the proposed legislation.

Officials representing the employers and the Department of Education and Science have been having informal talks in an attempt to defuse the impasse. Mr Baker does not believe that three rungs of Principal Teachers will be enough but is said to find proposals for four "interesting".

The employers say Mr Baker must abandon plans to replace the Burnham Committee with an advisory body on pay and conditions. But they admit that details of a national joint council, proposed under the Acas agreement, have been sketchy, particularly over the role of the Secretary of State.

Mr John Pearman, the employers' leader, said: "We are not talking about fiddling around with the levels of the Main Professional Grade. It would be nonsense to reduce levels when teachers have been balloted on pay and structure."

The National Union of Teachers was announcing ballot results yesterday, as the TES went to press, with officers hoping the vote in favour of the negotiated deal would be higher than

the 5-4 result at a special conference earlier this month.

The Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association, the third largest union, has already endorsed the deal in a ballot, 32,871 members voting in favour and 16,747 against, in a 55 per cent turnout.

The National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers, the second largest union, which has consistently opposed both the negotiated deal and the Baker alternative, was expecting massive "No" votes to both packages. Unofficial estimates put opposition running as high as five to one.

The employers plan a propaganda move for January 7 when they have called for a full meeting of the Burnham Committee. It is thought that any formal agreement ratified by the Committee would have to be implemented by Mr Baker under present arrangements, but he would not have to provide Government cash to help pay for it.

The meeting, however, will probably determine London allowances for this year.

Pilot appraisal projects in six authorities — Croydon, Cumbria, Newcastle, Salford, Somerset and Suffolk — will be put at risk unless there is a quick solution to the pay problem. The NUT is withdrawing cooperation from the Government's plan to take away the teachers' bargaining rights. The NAHT is refusing to advise cooperation until it is satisfied on pay and structure.

Although both organizations are still attending meetings of a national steering committee for the projects.

## AMA says no to more scrutiny

Metropolitan councils are opposing proposals to give the Audit Commission and the Local Government Ombudsman more powers to intervene in their business.

The Association of Metropolitan Authorities in a draft response to the Widdicombe Committee of Inquiry report, says the measures would increase the already "excessive resort to litigation".

Widdicombe recommended that the Audit Commission should have more power to prevent unlawful spending in addition to conducting independent scrutiny of council finances.

The committee said members of the public should be able to complain about alleged maladministration directly to the Ombudsman, instead of going through a councillor, and should have the right to challenge legally any remedy provided by a council found to have acted wrongly.

The Ombudsman should be able to investigate on his own initiative rather than react to complaints, said Widdicombe.

The AMA response, being considered by members yesterday, says the new powers proposed for auditors would increase their "excursions" into exercising political judgements on the interpretation of law.

The AMA wants reconsideration of suggestions that co-opted committee members, including those at present on education committees, should have their powers reduced to an advisory role. Such downgraded status, which would affect representatives of teachers, parents and churches, would reduce public right of access to discussion, debate and information, as well as policy-making, says the association's draft response.

## McGoldrick: Baker acts

The McGoldrick saga enters a new phase. Now Mr Baker has stepped in and issued a direction under Section 68 of the Education Act, instructing Brent to desist.

Section 68 has proved hazardous territory for previous secretaries of state. On the face of it, it looks straightforward enough: "If the Secretary of State is satisfied . . . that any local authority . . . has acted or is proposing to act unreasonably with respect to the exercise of any power conferred or the performance of any duty imposed by or under this Act, he may . . . give such directions as to the exercise of the power or the performance of the duty as appear to him to be expedient".

This would seem to make Mr Baker the judge of what is reasonable — the so-called "subjective" clause which law-makers used to rely on to give the minister discretion. But, as the DES discovered in the Tameside case in 1977, the courts are no longer prepared to let the Secretary of State's subjective view go unexamined and lay down stringent conditions which have to be met if (when challenged under the procedures for judicial review) he is to convince the judges that he has discharged his duty properly.

Here — as a Christmas bonus — are the pellucid words of Lord Wilberforce in the Tameside case to make this matter crystal clear: "If a judgement requires, before it can be made, the existence of some facts, then, although the evaluation of those facts is for the Secretary of State alone, the Court must inquire whether those facts exist, and have been taken into account, whether the judgement has not been made upon other facts which ought not to have been taken into account. If those requirements are not met then



the exercise of judgement, however bona fide it may be, becomes capable of challenge"

And, of course, challenge is what the DES lawyers must anticipate. Brent has argued all along that if it wants to give top priority to anti-racism (because it believes racism to be the most important reason why so many Brent students fail), it must take prompt action to follow up any allegation of racist behaviour, even if this proves to be gutless to inconvenience and distress. Otherwise, says Brent, the black community will not accept that the authority is serious.

This is a political judgement with which anyone may agree or disagree, and having seen TV pictures of Miss McGoldrick's return to her school after her suspension was lifted, most people are likely to feel that the authority would have been far wiser to let this matter drop and (if it feels it must have a test case to prove its credentials) find one which makes it look less vindictive.

But if the courts were to review a direction under Section 68 issued by the Secretary of State, what would be

at issue would not be whether Brent's decision to go ahead with the disciplinary action was wise or unwise but whether it was so unreasonable that no reasonable person (or authority) could have taken it. It is a very hard test which the Secretary of State would have to satisfy.

But from his point of view it is possible that to lose such a case might serve him as well as to win it. To issue a direction would prove that he cares and shares what is almost certainly a general public reluctance to see heads like Miss McGoldrick put in the dock. If the courts overturned him, then the net result might be to strengthen his campaign for stronger powers in a new, post-election education bill.

## No governors no decisions

The failure of the Inner London Education Authority to get its act together on governing bodies this term (page 9) has made a mockery of the whole concept of local democracy as it relates to school governance. Nothing could better illustrate the need for the 1986 Education Act, which removes political dominance of governing bodies.

The National Association of Governors and Managers has rightly pointed publicly to a situation that had been frustrating parents, teachers and would-be governors throughout Inner London: that more than half the schools in the authority had been without governing bodies for almost a term.

ILEA's political leaders may claim now that figures on reconstruction are improving all the time (rather as if you could boil up a governor out of dried powder — which would be one way of finding them) but the reality is that far too many schools have had their first governing bodies of the term announced at about 10.15 on the last week

before the Christmas holiday (and only then because the statutory duty was belatedly recognized).

This has meant that throughout an autumn term which has hardly been trouble-free there has been no proper body to make staff appointments, review pupil suspensions, ask questions about classes sent home because of teacher action, or to consult on major plans for tertiary education.

The reason for this unforfeitable delay is largely political and largely disreputable. The ILEA decided after the May direct elections that each governing body should have an extra parent, and should be required to co-opt two black governors. So far, so good, though it later emerged that the co-optees were to be provided or approved by a divisional committee, rather than the school community, (and that in any case they couldn't find anything like enough nominees) and, worse, that extra political appointments were to be made to perpetuate political control.

The ILEA has been paralysed by indecision for most of this year because it is finally coming up against budget realities. There is no credit to be had from neglecting decision-making at the school level as well, and on this record it richly deserves to lose political control of governors when the 1986 Act is in force next time round.

no comment

"Consortia, individual institutions and i.e.a.s have co-operated well over curriculum planning and staff development, but what about progression? The time is now ripe — perhaps overdue — for i.e.a.s to designate responsibility for progression policy for CPVE. In particular, progression into YTS and into unemployment require local attention."

From Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education October bulletin, published by the Further Education Unit.

## Independent peers wait to be convinced of need for law

There were few signs this week that Mr Kenneth Baker, the Education Secretary, would encounter a Lords revolt against his Teachers' Pay and Conditions Bill.

The Labour Party last week failed to block the Bill's passage through the Commons to the upper chamber despite a spirited filibuster. Its education spokesman, Mr Giles Radice, is now lobbying on the Lords defying the Government.

But although the local government lobby in the Lords is strong — it significantly amended the legislation obliging the Greater London Council — a number of peers seem unconvinced that Mr Baker's Bill poses a real threat to local democracy.

The proposed legislation will be debated in the upper house on January 12 when both Labour and Alliance will concentrate their fire on the committee that Mr Baker intends to appoint to advise him on teachers' pay and conditions.

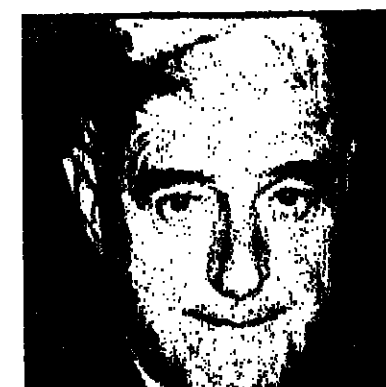
The committee would remove, for at least three years, any local government control over pay and conditions, and the Bill's opponents hope that this suspension of traditional free collective bargaining will work enough independent peers sufficiently to create problems for the Government.

The Opposition's strongest hope is to gain support from cross-bench peers for amendments that would increase the advisory committee's independence.

There are independent peers, such as Lord Alexander of Potterhill, a former secretary of the employers' side on the Burnham Committee, who view the Bill as providing for a dangerous erosion of central control over education.

But in the last few days before Christmas, there were few signs of the beginnings of a revolt from the cross-benchers — and without the votes of 20 independent peers, amendments are unlikely to succeed.

So far, the bishops have not shown much interest in getting embroiled in



Lord Alexander: central control

the debate. Mr Colin Alves, the secretary of the Church of England's board of education, said: "We are not expecting the bishops to contribute very much to any debate on this Bill. Our chairman, Dr Graham Leonard, the Bishop of London, will certainly not be there. He has prior commitments."

"I can't think of any other who is likely to want to make a particular contribution to the Bill's passage through the Lords does not help Labour and Alliance strategists. The second reading is scheduled for January 12, the first day back after the Christmas recess, when the chamber may not be well-attended."

Labour Party tactics on the day will depend on whether the local authorities and teachers' unions have been able to re-structure the existing pay package in a way that is acceptable to the Government.

Mr Baker's leader in the Lords, said: "If the Government decides deliberately to go against an agreement between the unions and their employers, and implies a pay deal, we would see that as a vindictive act."

The Labour and Alliance parties will be preparing for the advisory committee to contain representatives of teachers' unions and local government associations.

## THE TIMES Schools of thought



1. What has some British education in common with Peking?

2. By what age does he think you can understand *Animal Farm*?

3. Of what infants' school is this woman the headmistress?

If you can answer these questions, don't miss *The Times* Prize Christmas Quiz on December 24. It is designed to test your general knowledge on every conceivable subject — and there's champagne in store for the winners . . .

. . . and regularly in *The Times*, Bernard Levin (right) on the way we live now, Suzy Menkes on fashion, Irving Wardle on the theatre, Frances Gibb on the law, Peter Ackroyd on books, Shona Crawford Poole on travel, Philip Howard on words . . . and much more each week



THE TIMES  
The world's most famous newspaper (25p)



PLATFORM

Tony Lenney says that the Institute of Local Government's blueprint for Haringey may produce a few free-range eggs, but it won't provide a better managed education service for the borough

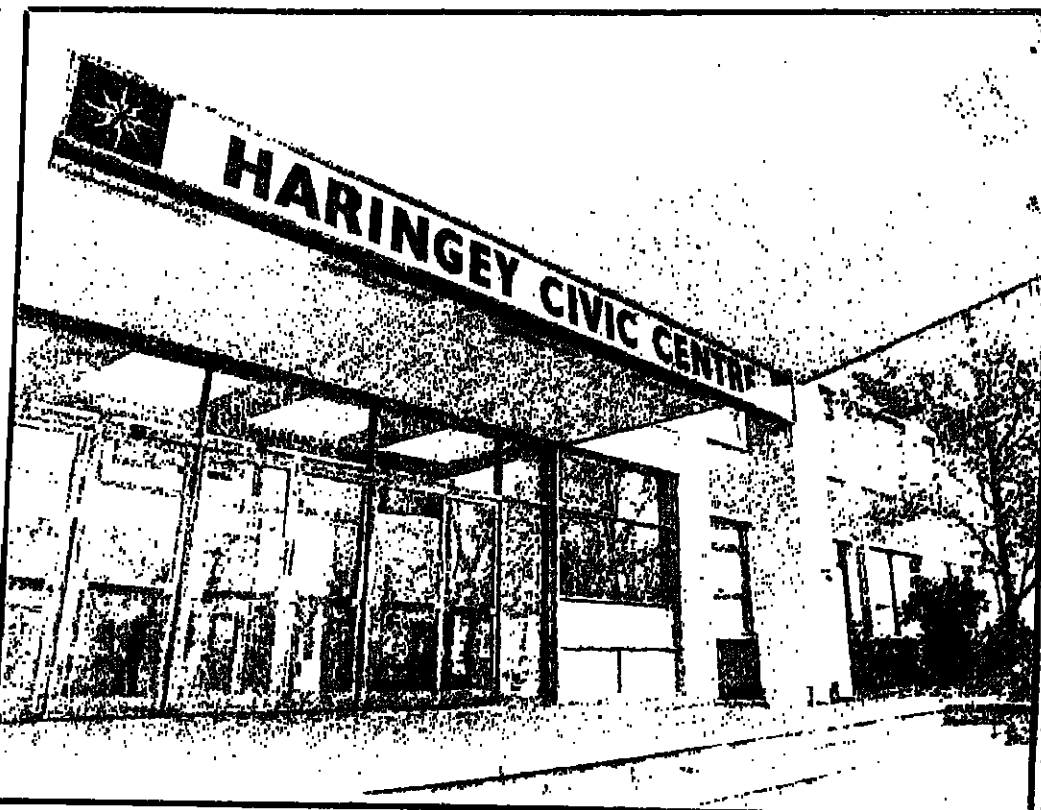
# The prefabricated hen-house

I was a bit disconcerting to see my photograph alongside Barry Hugill's article "Haringey people need more say" (TES December 5). I am a Haringey resident but this appeared to be taking things too far. He reported in passing the appointment of an excellent new chief education officer and surely Richard Jones deserved to be photographed in an article which described the Institute of Local Government's blueprint for a better education service within the borough.

I was also surprised at the statement that I resigned suddenly - I didn't, though after 13 years in the authority, eight of them as CEO, I did feel the need for a change of focus. What's more, my resignation had nothing in particular to do with council policies on lesbians and gay men as the report on this, as I regard this whole issue as one of the more sizeable educational red herrings of 1986.

Personally, I would be very happy to concur with Margaret Hodge, chair of the Association of London Authorities, who wrote in a recent letter to *New Society*: "It is true that local authorities have made mistakes in presenting their policies on anti-discrimination."

Of much more interest to the educational world as a whole, and to the people of Haringey in particular, is the content of the initial 70-plus page INLOGOV report produced at some expense in response to members' invitation to review "the structure, organization and management of the education service". Will this report map the way forward for Haringey and



Policy building: Haringey Civic Centre

there other vital issues, such as establishing an efficient support structure in order to impart skills and competences to all young people and at the same time enabling them to enjoy the process of learning irrespective of their cultural background, class or sex. The report has concentrated mainly on the context within which it is perceived education should be provided and managed, and excluded anything specific on the roles, responsibilities and relationships which I.e.a. officers and advisers should be expected to make their concern. With the exception of Chapter four, where even the more casual reader will detect a difference in style and purpose, the report is bland and unanalytical.

The content and rhetoric of the manifesto are clearly accepted as the starting point of the study without any attempt being made to tease out some of its inevitable problems and conflicts. It might have been instructive to suggest that if the education service is to consult as widely as is recommended about all aspects of its provision and development, the same process should be followed by those charged with the task of producing the manifesto. It seems rather bizarre having to set up machinery for costing the manifesto after it has been produced rather than doing the necessary homework beforehand in conjunction with the "public assemblies", "community forums", and "vision committees" proposed as part of the consultation model of the INLOGOV report.

One fascinating characteristic of the report is the extent to which it elevates anecdote to the level of essential substance. Take out all the quotations from "a councillor", "an adviser", "a black councillor", "an officer", "a community teacher" and so on and the size of the report would shrink considerably.

In the hands of a Studs Torkel the technique of interviewing and learning directly from what people say can produce results that are important as well as fascinating. It may be that he is able to capture the heartbeat of America with his interviews but INLOGOV has some way to go before it captures the educational heartbeat of Haringey via the same process. I wonder if any of those interviewed came from that group of about 20 per cent of secondary pupil parents who send their children to schools in neighbouring authorities?

It was interesting and instructive to learn from nine quotations in a paragraph on the advisory service and its alleged confusion about its role, that five of the brief phrases cited were all



New blood: Richard Jones. Inset, Tony Lenney

areas to be headed by a senior officer need some definition. This, no doubt, will be clarified in the final report though it is so important as to demand some detailed attention, even in an interim offering.

Second there is the issue of decentralization, which has long been a manifesto commitment in Haringey and has worked with some success in the delivery of housing and social services provision.

Again, it would be useful to have some indication of how many areas are

**'The whole section... would surely have George Orwell squirming in whatever place he now rests'**



Parent power: protest over "gay classes"



Flashpoint: parents' rights group member Rosemary Thomas heckles a council meeting this week over their "immoral" stance on homosexuality

ment and good practice and provided a perfectly cogent statement of the essential task that an advisory or inspection service is expected to perform. But which adviser let slip that there may be clearer ways of establishing the kind of framework that the INLOGOV writers were seeking.

And clarity is a commodity that it is not unreasonable to expect from a review of such importance which urges a redefinition of management roles, some of which will be generally welcomed. There are many areas of cloudiness but perhaps two stand out.

First there is the question of where a local education advisory service fits in to the newly codified areas of responsibility for the senior management team. I assume they will have a role in all the main areas identified - equal opportunities, planning and evaluation, curriculum, development, progression and support - but the question of responsibility, which

have been if some of the major ones had been analysed critically in the body of the report, there is little to add about this modus operandi except that there may be clearer ways of establishing the kind of framework that the INLOGOV writers were seeking. And clarity is a commodity that it is not unreasonable to expect from a review of such importance which urges a redefinition of management roles, some of which will be generally welcomed. There are many areas of cloudiness but perhaps two stand out. First there is the question of where a local education advisory service fits in to the newly codified areas of responsibility for the senior management team. I assume they will have a role in all the main areas identified - equal opportunities, planning and evaluation, curriculum, development, progression and support - but the question of responsibility, which

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## Shoulder-rubbing

It is unfair to surmise that Bernard Whitham, the Inner London Education Authority's deputy leader has, if not territorial ambitions, at least wide-ranging political ones? The black headmaster, hailing from the Caribbean island of Dominica, whose power base is now in Hackney, is not only leading a scheme to attract unemployed teachers from Scotland to vacancies in his area but, it is rumoured, has aspirations to a Government post back in the West Indies. Could that explain why there was a stylish reception for Caribbean high commissioners at County Hall last week? The official line is that it was part of "Caribbean Year" organized by the Commonwealth Institute, but it was an splendid opportunity for Mr Whitham and Mrs Frances Morrell, leader of the ILA and would-be to make friends and influence people.

## Clay pipe-dream

There have to be a debate going for there is no limit to the strain it takes their inventiveness. But about Mr Robert Clay was one explanation rose to the fore. Mr Clay, inspired by the "right" of Mr. The Secretary of State, at the heart of his ICB masters, is a member of teachers of their bargaining rights. By so doing he has, says Mr Clay, proved to thousands of teachers that the "justness" of the Marxist analysis of class war. And Mr Clay is something of an expert on class war. He now describes himself as "moderate", but a few years ago, he was called Rob rather than Bob, he was a member of the International Socialists, now known as the Socialist Workers' Party.

## Holy alliance

The Italian restaurant inconspicuously tucked in Church House, the administrative HQ of the Church of England, next door to Westminster Abbey, attracts not only clerics but radical visitors to the office of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities.

## Secrets safe

School-age computer hackers have been robbed by West Midlands Examination Board of the chance of a sneak preview of next year's GCSE and GCE papers. The board is breaking new ground as the first regional examination body to open its 120,000 computer to 600 secondary schools. The idea is to save thousands of pounds on paperwork and postage, enabling entry lists for examinations, and results, to be handled by computer print-out. Schools will also be able to key into the computer to obtain old papers for mock examinations. But the board has firmly decided to keep its secrets - by storing the questions on typewritten sheets kept in a locked safe.

## Acronym

School arson is becoming commonplace in parts of the country. Howard Sharron visits one burnt-out site and speaks to the head

# The fire that felled Four Oaks



Last month's fire destroyed the middle of the school but not its heart, according to the head, Mrs Maureen Edge

When Mrs Maureen Edge rushed to her school at 9 pm on November 27 she found 20-ft high flames consuming the building. It was obvious, even before the fire-tenders arrived, that most of the school was beyond hope.

The centre of Four Oaks first school in Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham, was completely destroyed. Only the foundations remain.

Mrs Edge, the school's head, says her first reaction was one of shock, and she still seems dazed by the experience. But the shock was followed by a profound anger that anyone could have been so callous and destructive.

Four Oaks was the thirty-fourth Birmingham school in the past 18 months to have fallen victim to fire-raising. Evidence of forced entry was found at Four Oaks and two 14-year-old boys have since been charged with arson.

Damages to the school are estimated at £400,000 bringing the total cost of school fires in the city to £1 million since April 1985.

Such is the concern in Birmingham about school arson that Mr Les Byron, chairman of the education committee, is proposing to post sizeable rewards for information that leads to convictions.

He has also asked the chief fire officer and the chief constable of the West Midlands to mount an urgent investigation into the problem.

Mr Byron's anxiety is more than justified, according to Ian MacWilliam, assistant divisional officer of the West Midlands fire brigade. "There has been an extraordinarily high number of school fires in the past two years. The incidence is climbing rapidly. It is very serious."

In 1985 there were 117 school fires in the West Midlands county area. So far this year the figure is 142. Well over 90 per cent of these fires were started deliberately, according to Mr MacWilliam.

He added that the number of prosecutions had been very low. But it had

been established that the culprits were nearly always pupils at the school or very recent ex-pupils.

The fire investigation unit of the brigade had established that school arson attacks generally involved forced entry. Fire "accelerants" like petrol or paraffin were frequently used; on occasions, small bonfires were constructed as starter fires.

The unit has found that the fires were started as an indirect consequence of vandalism, as a means of trying to hide a theft, or because the culprit had a grudge against the school.

The fire brigade's figures are county-wide and some West Midlands education authorities seem unaware of the scale of the problem.

Birmingham only learned of its school fire crisis when Mr Byron asked his assistant to investigate other fires following the razing of Four Oaks. The only overall figures on school fires were held in the treasurer's department and the I.e.a. seemed to have no idea there was a significant problem. A spokesman for the West Midlands police said that the force had not

## What makes an arsonist spark

There is no single, stereotypical arsonist, according to a psychologist who has worked with a number of young fire-raisers.

Dr Barrie Brown, district psychologist for Birmingham Health Authority, said he had seen one youngster who had wanted to get back at a school by setting it alight. Another could merely have been experimenting with fire. A third had been seeking attention but had been unaware of the danger caused. And a fourth had set a building on fire for no apparent reason.

Only a tiny minority of arsonists appeared to get excitement out of seeing things burn, Dr Brown said.

And as the excitement seemed to be sexual, he did not know to what extent it applied to children.

Arson was part of an overall delinquent style that was clearly associated with availability of opportunity, he added. Schools were probably hit because they were empty for periods of time.

Fire-raisers in their later middle school years tend to be involved in a range of delinquent activities and commonly have histories of cruelty to animals because they appear unable to grasp the link between their behaviour and its consequences.

"They experiment because they are not quite sure what the reaction will

be," Dr Brown said. "They try things out and become more extreme in what they do."

But he emphasized that a youngster's prior experience was more significant than his or her personality. One looked at criminal influences at home and for signs of disruption in relationships between children and parents. Major family traumas, marital breakdowns and poor relationships between children and parents or step-parents all seemed to be associated with general criminality.

But the best predictor of an arsonist was his or her fire-raising past.

Sue Surkes

# Economies leading to shortage of technicians, says physics institute

by Ian Nash

Four out of 10 secondary schools in England and Wales cannot afford to employ technicians for physics classes, a survey has revealed.

Ms Jane Lowth, education officer for the Institute of Physics, says technicians in one-third of schools have no relevant qualifications and "lack initiative and confidence" in their daily work.

The average school had 780 pupils and fewer than two full-time equivalent technicians to support all science departments. Even then, their job also included such tasks as photocopying, collecting dinner money or acting as

the school nurse. "Very low pay and part-time hours were cited as reasons for the poor quality of most applications for school technician posts," she said. Most teachers were dissatisfied with both the working hours and professional ability of the average technician.

The institute based its conclusion on a detailed questionnaire sent to one in ten physics departments. More than three-quarters of the randomly-selected target schools responded. "Provision is slightly better in single sex and independent schools, but technicians in the average school spend only a quarter of their time working for the physics department," Ms Lowth said.

The greatest obstacle to a smooth working day was lack of time, said heads of department. "Most seem to have between three and six untimetable periods a week." In addition, because of shortages elsewhere, most physics teachers were expected to take on such duties as running computer and electronics clubs.

The average school had fewer than three staff teaching physics. In the senior school, examination teaching

was usually left to the head of department, who had to make up for the shortcomings of non-specialist teaching by biologists and chemists further down the school. Lack of funds for equipment was mentioned as the greatest problem after shortage of time. Most departments were led by local authority regulations to using nearby equipment suppliers which were expensive, often leaving no money for repairs and maintenance.

## Privatization plan drawn up

by Geraldine Hackett

A plan for state schools to be run privately by trusts forms the centrepiece of a new manifesto from the Hillgate group, an education pressure group that has influenced Conservative Party policy-makers.

One of the contributors to the five-member "think tank" is Mr Lawrence Norcross, head of Highbury Grove comprehensive in Islington, London. Other members include the philosopher, Mr Roger Scruton, Mr John Marks and Baroness Cox. The manifesto will be published on December 29.



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# Tougher line on breaches of safety rules threatened

by Ian Nash

The Factory Inspectorate is planning to prosecute the next local education authority that falls foul of the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act to set an example to the rest.

The decision to tighten up on L.e.s. and schools reflects the Health and Safety Executive's concern over the extent to which employers neglect the law.

Inspectors are in the process of visiting 20 per cent of all schools and colleges in England and Wales to test the effectiveness of policy guidelines issued last year by the HSE Education Service Advisory Committee.

Results should be analysed and published by next October but there are already preliminary indications that headteachers need much more help in monitoring health and safety policies in practice.

Overwhelming evidence shows that the ESAC guidelines have been useful, particularly the checklists on safety that are regularly issued with the advice. But it is also evident that very few L.e.s. require heads to draw up statements of school policy.

The HSE's recent decision to take a tougher line was followed last month by the first prosecution of a teacher under the Act. A Stockport chemistry teacher was fined £500 after an explosion in his laboratory slightly injured 15 pupils.

However, fewer than one in every 1,000 investigations by HSE in both the manufacturing and service industries result in prosecutions. The reason, particularly in schools, according to one HSE official, is that it is often virtually impossible to attach blame. "On our visits we ask teachers whether they have had any health and safety training. Too often they have not," he said.

But ultimate responsibility lies with the L.e.s., and this is where the next exemplary prosecution is likely to be aimed.

In addition to the school visits survey, the HSE is planning a more exhaustive postal survey to all L.e.s. to find out how effective current practices and the ESAC guidelines are.

Temporary heaters which burn liquefied petroleum gas must be used only in emergencies and should not be used to supplement normal heating systems, the HSE ESAC says in an advice note to schools this week.

It warns of the toxic risks and outlines the ventilation required when such heaters are in use. *Temporary Use of Liquefied Petroleum Gas Heaters in Schools* is available from the Education Service National Industry Group, HSE, Maritime House, 1 Linton Road, Barking, Essex IG11 8HF (01-594 5522 ext 221).



Global view: pupils should recognize how their lives influence conditions in other parts of the world

## Geography widens horizons - HMI

by Sue Surkes

The study of geography can be a particularly useful preparation for life in multi-ethnic Britain, HM Inspectorate says in its latest *Curriculum Matters* discussion document.

Primary teachers should try to reveal the rich and diverse contributions that individuals and groups from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds bring to life in Britain, the inspectors say. In secondary schools, "geographical education should aim to counteract the ignorance and stereotyping upon which racial prejudice and injustice feed."

Geography from 5-16 deals with objectives at the early primary, later primary and secondary stages. In a section on the later primary years, the inspectors say: "HMI surveys and inspections have indicated that while some geographical work of very high

quality is produced, in general primary schools need to improve their planning of this part of the curriculum to achieve higher standards of understanding and skills."

Secondary pupils should be helped to "gain a fuller understanding of some controversial social, economic, political and environmental issues which have a geographical dimension, reflect on their own and other peoples' attitudes to these issues and make their own informed judgements."

Youngsters should study contrasting political and economic systems and places with differing levels of economic development. And content should be gradually widened to include more places and topics within a carefully structured framework. "Pupils should be helped to develop a global rather than a parochial view of their environ-

ment, recognizing how their own lives influence and are influenced by conditions and events in other parts of the world."

The inspectors say the exploration of controversial issues such as inequalities in human welfare and depletion of resources can be challenging to teachers, but they add: "It is important that teachers take care to avoid bias in the overall presentation of information to pupils and in tasks which they set."

Monitoring pupils' progress is essential, they stress. But teachers should not attempt to assess pupils' feelings about particular issues and should beware of over-assessment in general. Readers' comments on the publication should be sent to the Staff Inspector (Geography), Department of Education and Science, York Road, London SE1 7PH by March 31.



## Keeping the writing off the wall

Up Britain campaigners who lead children as litter-bugs may be tempted by the results of a survey by MORI - given exclusively to *The TES* - that suggests that 74 per cent of schools have graffiti on their walls. The survey, carried out by Dr Ben Fletcher and Ms Anita Jackson, of Hatfield Polytechnic, was a follow-up to a 1984 study. At that time, a quarter of the schools which had ordered microfilm had not yet received them. While 97 per cent of the 200 schools surveyed now have a micro, 55 per cent of them have only one. On average, each school has 1.8 micro which is no increase on two years ago. Schools, however, do have more equipment to go with their micros. Disc drives were found in 92 per cent of schools, compared to 43 per cent two years ago, and printers in 38 per cent, an increase of 24 per cent on 1984.

Most teachers are very favourably disposed to the computer with 50 per cent of the staff in 75 per cent of the schools making use of them. However, all had to do with the lack of resources. For example, 70 per cent of heads said there were not enough computers, 60 per cent complained that there was not enough time to integrate computer work satisfactorily into the curriculum, and 39 per cent thought that software was of poor quality.

According to Dr Fletcher, Hertfordshire children spend depressingly little time on the micros. Some 73 per cent only had access to a computer once a week or less (with 32 per cent using one only once a fortnight or less). Fifty per cent of teachers said that their children had 15 to 30 minutes on the computer while 37 per cent reported that their pupils had less than 15 minutes. Only 13 per cent estimated that pupils spent more than 30 minutes with a computer.

Although most primary schools now have a computer, children have little opportunity to operate it and the programs they use are still mainly of the drill and practice type. These findings from a survey of 192 heads and 561 teachers in Hertfordshire were given in a paper to the British Psychological Society at London's City University yesterday. The survey, carried out by Dr Ben Fletcher and Ms Anita Jackson, of Hatfield Polytechnic, was a follow-up to a 1984 study. At that time, a quarter of the schools which had ordered microfilm had not yet received them. While 97 per cent of the 200 schools surveyed now have a micro, 55 per cent of them have only one. On average, each school has 1.8 micro which is no increase on two years ago. Schools, however, do have more equipment to go with their micros. Disc drives were found in 92 per cent of schools, compared to 43 per cent two years ago, and printers in 38 per cent, an increase of 24 per cent on 1984.

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Stocking fillers: pupils at Marlborough School, Kensington, have been taking part in the London Festival Ballet's community programme. The project has cross-curricular links with dance, music, art, craft and even literacy.

## Age-old problems balking spread of new technology

by Julia Hagedorn

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## Management training call for maths coordinators

by Ian Nash

Primary teachers responsible for developing the mathematics curriculum need more time out of the classroom to carry out their management duties and they need more in-service training and support at all stages of their career, research in 84 local education authorities has revealed.

Only one in five primary mathematics coordinators has a written job description, Miss Marion Stowe, a research officer for the National Foundation for Educational Research told a conference on management issues in education.

Nearly seven out of ten primary schools have a maths coordinator who is directly responsible to the head. While teachers must be answerable for mathematics lessons in their own classrooms, the coordinator is responsible for all curriculum development.

Given the choice, schools prefer to delegate responsibility for the management of mathematics in this way. Where no one has been appointed, it was usually because of a lack of suitable applicants, she said.

In the absence of a coordinator, the task was usually adopted by the head who, while in a better position to "monitor mathematics" was said to be less accessible to teachers.

The demand for primary mathematics coordinators had increased following the publication of the Cockcroft report and the Department of Education and Science discussion document *Mathematics from 5-16*, which renewed the pressure for curriculum change.

HM Inspectorate has praised East Twerton Infants' school in Bath for its thoughtful and sensitive approach to special needs children - but it points out that there could be better places to teach them than the school canteen.

Children with learning difficulties and behavioural problems are normal, and should be taught in the classroom with learning difficulties, particularly stories that they know well and enjoy, and their response to this work is good."

But the inspectors suggest that the familiar classroom environment might be a better place for helping these children.

Valuable practical support is provided, however, by the weekly visit of a speech therapist and the educational psychologist.

HMI also says that the school could also at greater consistency in challenging and extending its more able pupils.

The initiative, which was established to help local groups work with the Under-Fives, has funded day centres for children from bed and breakfast accommodation. It has created 25 full-time and 37 part-time jobs

and provided day care services for more than 1,000 children in areas of social need.

The Government has declared that it will not extend the three-year programme after 1987 on the grounds that it was a pump-priming exercise and local authorities should now take over financial responsibility for projects in their area.

Local authorities, however, say that rate limitations have left them short of funds.

## IN BRIEF

### NUS campaign against loans

The National Union of Students has launched a campaign against the introduction of loans as part of a reformed student support system, currently under government review.

A series of regional demonstrations, leading to a national demonstration in London in the New Year, and a lobby of university vice-chancellors, directors of polytechnics and MPs has been planned. Mrs Vicky Phillips, NUS president, warned: "The student movement still has a great deal of strength. What has happened in Paris shows that if you are determined to oppose something you can achieve it, just as we stopped the introduction of tuition fees in 1984."

### Book tax threat

The European publishers' group, GELC, is to oppose the introduction of VAT on books in the EEC. The current zero rating on books in the UK, Ireland and Portugal and the low rate imposed by most other member states will change if an unexpected draft directive on VAT throughout the Community becomes law. The *Group of European Publishers of the CEE* is also campaigning for adequate expenditure on books in schools, universities, colleges and libraries.

### Wildlife degree

Liverpool University has introduced a new honours degree course in world wildlife conservation and management, based in its department of zoology. According to Dr David Ennor, a zoology lecturer, "The pressures on natural resources are of immense concern to modern biologists and this concern is shared by teachers, environmentalists and industrialists."

### Coventry chief

The new director of education in Coventry will be Mr Chris Farmer, currently the deputy chief education officer in Sheffield and the man who has played a major role in formulating the city's post-primary reorganization and tertiary college plans. Mr Farmer, aged 42, has been in Sheffield for 10 years and previously taught at Manygates in Wakefield and Taunton school in Somerset.

### NATFHE post

Mr Geoff Woolf, a history lecturer at Southgate Technical College, London, takes over as vice-president of the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education next May after his unopposed election.

### Bank sponsor

Sixth-formers who apply for places in polytechnics and colleges of higher education next year will receive advice on money management from Lloyds Bank with their applicants' guide. The move follows a sponsorship deal worth £85,000 between Lloyds, British Rail and National Express, and the Polytechnics Central Admissions System.

### Engineers' guide

A group of Essex teachers have produced an engineering handbook for pupils aged 11 to 18 who are studying Crafts, Design and Technology. It covers theory and skills with particular emphasis on the practical side of engineering and metalwork and is being distributed free to large schools in Essex. Further information can be obtained from Miss Paula Graham of Marconi Communication Systems, sponsors of the project, on 0245-353221.

### Industry awards

Four schools have each been awarded £1,000 worth of tools for their contributions to curriculum planning and development, particularly in the field of industry links, as part of Stanley Tools' commemoration of Industry Year. They are Beckfoot grammar school, West Yorkshire; Brownedge St Mary's RC high school, Lancashire; Horringer Court middle school, Suffolk; and Leeds girls' school. A £300 merit award was given to Brune Park school in Hampshire.

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## SDP backs teaching council

by Geraldine Hackett

An independent body to regulate the teaching profession is being suggested by the Social Democratic Party in its latest education discussion paper.

The proposals would mean a general teaching council, which would maintain a register of all teachers.

The council would need initial support from the Government but, the paper suggests, the council could quickly become self-financing through membership subscriptions. The ruling body would be elected from teachers, candidates would not have to be nominated by a teachers' union.

Once established, the council would be independent, responsible for registering and regulating the teaching profession. Its role might include advising and approving programmes of in-service training or an advisory role on appraisal schemes.

Mrs Anne Sofer, a member of the SDP's executive, said a general teaching council could go some way to restoring the morale of staff.

"We would hope the ruling executive would be elected from teachers, not only from trade union representatives," she said.

## Under-Fives Initiative facing funding crisis

The Under-Fives Initiative, set up with the aid of a £1.2 million grant from the Department of Health and Social Security, will come to an end next year unless alternative funding can be found.

The initiative, which was established to help local groups work with the Under-Fives, has funded day centres for children from bed and breakfast accommodation. It has created 25 full-time and 37 part-time jobs

and provided day care services for more than 1,000 children in areas of social need.

The Government has declared that it will not extend the three-year programme after 1987 on the grounds that it was a pump-priming exercise and local authorities should now take over financial responsibility for projects in their area.

Local authorities, however, say that rate limitations have left them short of funds.

## Special lessons in canteen

HM Inspectorate has praised East Twerton Infants' school in Bath for its thoughtful and sensitive approach to special needs children - but it points out that there could be better places to teach them than the school canteen.

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# Enterprise pilot will urge young to boldly go

All Youth Training Scheme youngsters will be encouraged to undergo "enterprise training" under a plan announced by Lord Young, the Employment Secretary, this week. Employers and other YTS-approved training organizations will be required to make the courses available within the next three years.

As part of their overall YTS course, trainees will spend up to six months setting up and running a project which may or may not be a commercial enterprise. A pilot programme for the scheme was launched on Monday, amid some confusion as to its objectives.

Lord Young described the main aim as encouraging the development of an enterprise economy, adding that "young people who act in a self-reliant and entrepreneurial manner will be the workforce of tomorrow". He claimed that enterprise had been "squeezed out of the classroom" and that for 25 years schools had not given any attention to the concept of self-employment or the existence of the world of work.

But Mr Colin Bell, who heads the consortium running the £1.5 million pilot programme for the Manpower Services Commission, insisted that enterprise did not mean the same thing as business or "entrepreneurialism", and that the training would aim at making youngsters enterprising in a wide variety of situations in and out of employment.

It was left to MSC officials, headed by their director, Mr Geoffrey Holland, to explain that the intention was to offer project-based learning to develop initiative and personal skills such as problem-solving. "A lot of what we are after is taught in the primary schools but gets squeezed out after that," said Mr Graham Kendall, head



Life classes: trainees would be able to undertake business or adventure projects

of the MSC's quality branch. The scheme originated within Mr Kendall's branch earlier this year as a way of providing the personal development which has always been part of the YTS formula, but has been given low priority by most employers. It was developed for the MSC by the Centre for Employment Initiatives and gained Lord Young's instant backing when the Commission hit on the idea of calling it enterprise training.

The pilot programme, under which 116 YTS schemes will offer the training from early next summer, is being prepared by Entrain, a consortium which includes Young Enterprise, the agency which promotes mini-companies in schools, and Shell, the oil company.

The consortium is developing mod-

ules which will be supplied free to the pilot schemes, but which other YTS managing agents will be expected to buy. The MSC hopes that by April 1989 at least 1,000 of the country's YTS schemes will offer the training, and that in the following year it will be available throughout the YTS.

The MSC's briefing to Entrain makes it plain that it wants to provide youngsters with a wide range of options, many of them remote from any kind of business activity. It is suggesting that the training should consist of three modules covering preparation, the project itself, and assessment.

Module 1 could take the form of an intensive series of activities designed to raise awareness of enterprise and to enable trainees to find out which of the types of project in the scheme they

want to choose. It would be followed by a period of project planning, in which trainees would design either individual or group projects.

Module 2 would involve undertaking a community, business or adventure enterprise, or a training project. The first could either mean a group of trainees producing goods or services to meet some community need or an individual trainee finding a placement in a community or voluntary organization.

The business option would mean either joining with other trainees to set up a company or co-operative to make and sell something, or an individual carrying out a business study, getting attached to a small business, or running a one-man business.

The adventure option would involve

planning and carrying out a project either as part of a group or alone.

The training option would mean either establishing a "quality circle" to improve their YTS scheme, or a trainee planning and negotiating a programme for himself or herself.

As far as the MSC is concerned, what matters is that trainees should learn by experience how to make decisions, manage resources, and influence other people; and that they should demonstrate drive and determination.

Module 3, to be taken near the end of YTS training, would provide final assessment and certification, and for trainees to look at how what they had learned could be applied after leaving the scheme, "either within the context of employment or unemployment". Details of trainees' enterprise learning and of any achievements in the course of it, including qualifications, would be recorded on the YTS certificate.

He says the MSC will, through the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative, encourage schools to adopt the same kind of approach to developing pupils' personal skills and attitudes.

Mr Bell claims that enterprise training will eventually produce changes in the nature of all education and training.

But a question closer at hand is how to persuade employers not only to buy the modules, but to allow trainees to spend time on the training when they could be doing productive work. Employment ministers will do the rounds of employers in a series of regional conferences in the New Year to enlist their co-operation.

Edited by Mark Jackson

Ian Nash on the thwarted attempts to undermine the plan for city technology colleges

## Firing blanks at a fast moving target



One step ahead: pupils at the Stanley boys' school in Croydon already get a CTC-style education

Opponents who panic in a duel are apt to shoot themselves in the foot, but not twice - unless they happen to be arguing about city technology colleges.

When the Education Secretary's advisors hinted that this year's Conservative Party Conference would be a platform to announce plans for "super technical schools", adversaries assumed Government was firing off another round of blanks.

They were, therefore, taken off guard by the official launch, with a glossy supportive PR brochure - a marked departure for the usually staid Department of Education and Science - offering "a wider choice of secondary school".

The latest foot-shooting exercise came from Labour-controlled Knowsley which challenged Mr Kenneth Baker to extend the CTC experiment to Merseyside, for children "who have not done well in primary school, who have little or no support in the home and who are victims of other kinds of economic and cultural disadvantage".

Ironical in intent, maybe, but Mr Baker took them literally. "I am willing to take up your offer. If you are willing to make premises available for a school under independent sponsorship and control, I believe there is sufficient common ground for ...

But it was Alliance members of Devon education authority who suffered the worst self-inflicted wounds when they tried to convince the Association of County Councils to resist the CTCs.

the argument to the opposition of CTCs in principle, they demanded blanket condemnation of Government policies - and Conservative members opposed.

Now the official position of the ACC is, and will probably remain for the foreseeable future: "We have taken no formal position on the scheme."

Officers of the ACC are also said to be smarting from wounds because a closely-argued paper to this education committee failed to get full consideration as a result of the party-political machinations.

Although there is a reference in the DES booklet to discussions with "a number of individuals and organizations in the business community and elsewhere" there was no prior consultation with I.E.A.s, says the ACC.

Such talks "could have indicated more fruitful lines for much-needed investment in education to the advantage of all communities and not only part of some selected urban ones".

Fragrantly, the ACC officers see as "unacceptable" the creation of a new sector with additional school places at a time when I.E.A.s are being urged to reduce existing provision in line with falling rolls.

What is surprising is that many opponents have responded by assuming that CTCs are something new, radical. But their like can be found in areas such as Croydon where the Stanley Tool Company has for a while sponsored Stanley boys' school, a former technical school.

Until last week it was a front-runner, along with Kingshurst in Solihull, for the first CTC site in the country. Kingshurst won because Mr

Baker saw no point in establishing a new college in, an I.E.A. which is already providing the kind of education that CTCs would offer.

But the greatest concern in the ACC paper is a constitutional rather than a pragmatic or educational one. The booklet makes it clear that 750 to 1,000 pupils of all abilities from each city catchment area of 5,000 should be selected.

This implies a one-fifth drop in maintained school rolls. "This means close I.E.A. maintained schools," says the paper. "If any resultant Section 12 notices receive objections, as is likely, it is not clear how the Secretary of State will be able to consider them impartially when the proposals are based on the need to accommodate the existence of a CTC in the area."

Nor was it clear, from the information so far available to the ACC, whether he would recognize the increased diseconomies of falling rolls.

"For the Secretary of State in effect to found new schools, without consultation with I.E.A.s, marks a further move from the principles of the 1944 Act which placed on I.E.A.s the duty to secure that there are sufficient schools for their area," says the ACC paper.

However, there are already signs that the supportive authorities do not see the CTCs in the same light as their creator, Mr Baker. Solihull has no intention of restricting intake to the locality, hence it sees no threat to neighbouring schools.

Kingshurst is scheduled to close through falling rolls and the teacher unions where the ACC concern that the opening of a CTC on site will merely transfer the closure problem to a neighbouring school. Mr Colin Humm, however, the education director, is adamant that it will not. "The CTC will also serve Birmingham and Warwickshire," he said.

In addition to the appeals procedure outlined in the 1980 Education Act, there is the authority of the governing body and the question of parental involvement to consider.

This question, at least, was unanswered by Mr John Heger, head of the CTC unit at the DES, when he spoke at a recent British School Technology conference. He said that the Government wanted governing bodies to represent fully the need of parents, as defined under the Act, and for governing bodies to be "largely independent" of the sponsoring trusts.

The DES booklet is also too vague about funding to satisfy the ACC. Sponsors will meet capital costs and a Government grant will be paid based on pupil-teacher ratios in line with "good inner city practice".

Such funding could prove "relatively generous for a school able to select its intake, not providing for special needs, and offering less choice in subjects studied," says the ACC paper which is clearly sceptical of Mr Baker's claims that the schools will be comprehensive.

It is also concerned that there will be heavy capital investment, whatever the source, on new schools, rather than on improvements to existing schools which have no shortage of places.

The proposed curriculum is supposed to be based on the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative from which, "so far, the lesson has perhaps been that more can be done with more resources." CTCs reintroduce in schools the need to make curriculum choices at 11 and take specialisms at 14. "For example, there is no expressive arts option in the model curriculum."

Moreover, the ACC paper points out that the CTCs "also assume a very high staying-on rate indeed if all the sixth-form options are to be viable."

The paper concludes that it might have been better investment nationally to top up the limited funding available for TVEI, helping rural pupils where the sparsity of population makes the placing of a CTC unrealistic.

One reason why adversaries may feel thwarted in their opposition is that Mr Baker has thrown everything at them from the Repeal of the Reorganisation of Teachers Act to AS levels and the demand of appraisal.

If that is the case then maybe those who feel aggrieved should consider their arguments more carefully if they do not wish to carry on simply picking their wounds.

Do poor spellers concentrate too much on the shape rather than the sound of words? Sue Surkes went to Somerset to find out

## Listening in to the oohs and aahs

A technique to improve short-term memory and literacy skills among pupils with learning difficulties is being developed in Somerset.

Pupils at 20 of the county's rural schools have been introduced to ARROW - Aural, Read, Respond, Oral, Written - which relies on a two-track tape recorder and a technique known as the self-voice echo. The children, who include dyslexics, hearing impaired, as well as mainstream pupils, read and listen to words or phrases re-recorded on a master tape, repeat the words out loud, listen to their replies, and write down what they have heard. The taped words can be broken into syllables and strung together on re-play and pictures can be substituted for children who find reading difficult.

Dr Colin Lane, an education researcher and teacher of the deaf who has pioneered the technique, believes that most people only internalize the principles of language by sounding out individual words and phrases to themselves. The ARROW technique seeks to help those who cannot internalize in their own.

"It's like dictating a speech onto a tape and listening to it to memorize it, or recording revision notes and playing them back while you're asleep," Dr Lane said. "The same principles apply."

As part of his PhD, Dr Lane tested the children at his own school, Hugh Key middle school in Wedmore, and found that they rated their own voices higher than 10 others they heard on tape, even when only a single vowel was repeated.

Further research indicated that, working seven out of 20 in a reading test were able to achieve 18 out of 20 after two weeks of daily sessions with ARROW.

Dr Lane said that he had retained 80 per cent of what they had learnt.

The latest development in the research has come from a study of internalizing using 100 children from 10 schools. Dr Lane found that 15 pupils, the majority of whom were non-spellers, relied more on the shapes of words than the sounds during recall. According to Dr Lane, they were not internalizing words because they were not coding them in terms of sound.

"It's harder to remember words that sound the same than words that look the same," he said. "We are trying to

break the children's absolute reliance on the shapes. Within one-and-a-half to two hours on ARROW, 11 of the children improved their auditory recall scores by 33 per cent."

Dr Lane's original idea came during an evening class in French. He wondered whether the technique of listening to one's own voice in the language laboratory could be adapted to help children at Hugh Sexey's special unit for the hearing impaired.

The system has produced dramatic results. Layne, aged 10, is profoundly hard of hearing and is said to have been almost impossible to understand a year ago. Now he has his taped utterances flashed back at him at rapid intervals.

Once he has managed to pronounce correctly a word with the headphones on, he is asked to listen and repeat, standing at various distances away from Dr Lane, and sometimes with his back turned.

Mrs Shirley Manley, his mother, said: "His whole listening and speaking capability has improved. If he is upstairs in his bedroom and I shout from downstairs that lunch is ready, he will shout back 'all right, Mum'. Before, I would have to go and tap him." Layne's hearing had not improved, Dr Lane explained, rather his ability to listen and identify sounds.

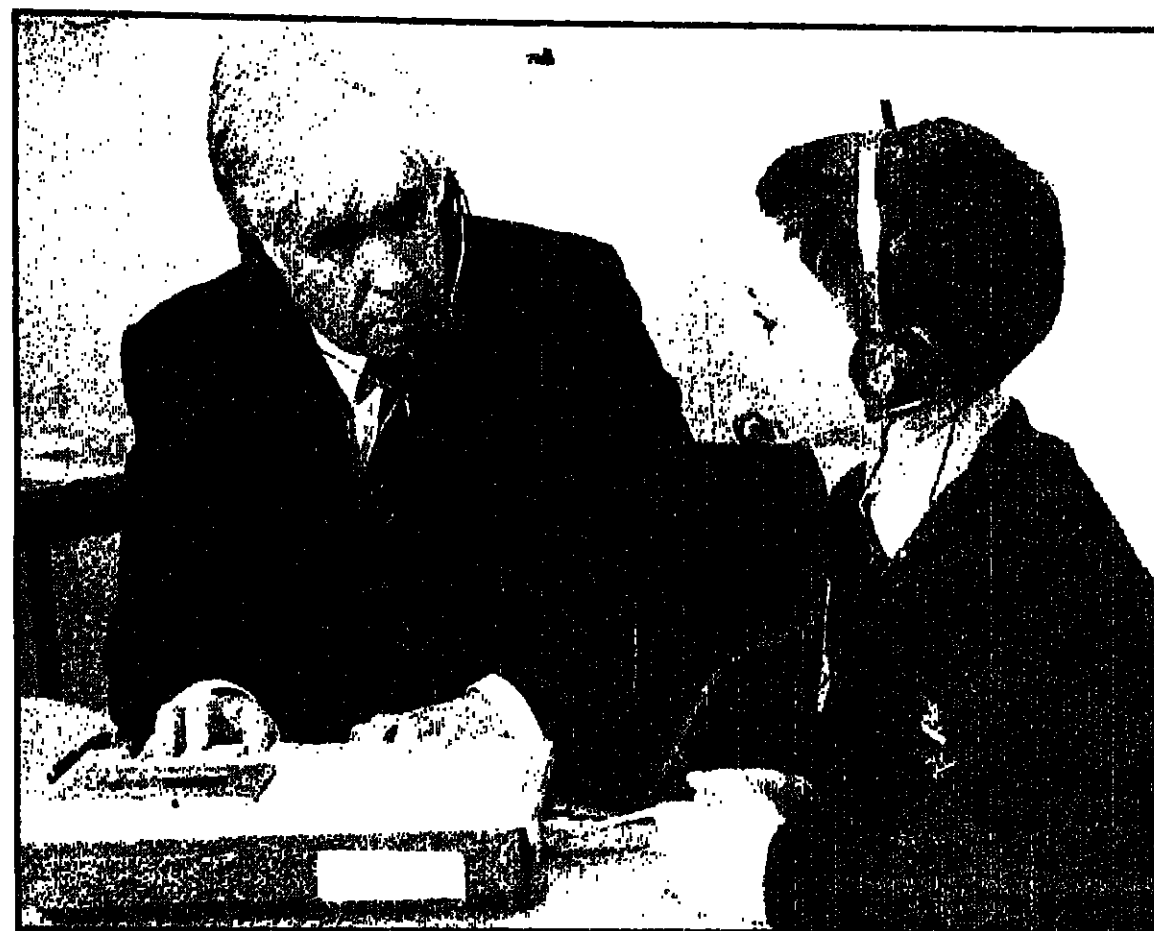
At Avon special school a few miles away, ARROW is credited with similar success. Mr Cyril Cunn, the head-teacher, said of his pupils: "For the first time, they have been presented with the pattern of their own voice, with the ARROW system stringing together the component sounds."

Sharon, aged 10, who was described as unintelligible and prone to tantrums before she started the programme, now rushes to be first on the headphones and confidently repeats a series of simple words and phrases.

Dr Lane is keen to see the ARROW technique extended to all ages and abilities, and across the curriculum. The system has already been used in aid rote learning of multiplication tables, he says. Subject content can also be put on to tape so children can learn, for example, about spring.

At Cutcut primary school, the equipment is used with mainstream primary children. Dr Lane has also coached an A level student.

ARROW has now been adopted by five education authorities outside Somerset and interest has been expressed from the Netherlands, Sweden and the United States.



Getting it taped: Dr Colin Lane teaching short-term memory to Andrew Cooze, aged 10, from Bridgewater

The beauty of the system, Dr Lane says, is that it is simple, relatively cheap and can be operated by the children themselves.

He hopes that he has been lucky, because the system has been used in a number of schools and has been successful.

With this support, Dr Lane is planning the next stage. He intends to explore the possibilities of feeding sounds into whichever ear is implicated with the weaker half of the brain.

"The right of the brain is more holistic and the left better geared for sequencing. I want to see what would happen if I fed the sound into the right ear of a child with sequencing problems."

## Sixth-forms to close

North West, each with more than 100 pupils, are to close with the blessing of Mr Kenneth Baker, the Education Secretary.

The move is part of a major reorganization of secondary education in Stockport where sixth-forms are to be replaced by six sixth-form colleges.

Mr Jim Hendy, director of education, said he was surprised by Mr Baker's "lack of interference". The Education Secretary recently blocked a move to include similar sixth-forms in the tertiary reorganization plan.

"The reason our plans have received

public approval must be because the public got involved in the detailed consultations," he said.

Mr Baker approved the closure of Bramell High School sixth-form, which will go in a three-stage reorganization of 11 to 16 comprehensives - despite 150 letters of objection from parents. Reorganization will start next September.

Two single-sex schools in Stockport will be amalgamated to form an 11 to 16 school and two of the present 11 to 16 comprehensives will close. Three others will become sixth-form colleges.

## 'No-governors' outcry

by Jeremy Sutcliffe



Anne Sofer: "schools suffering"

More than half the schools in inner London have been without governing bodies for almost a term, holding up appointments and angering parents and staff, according to the National Association of Governors and Managers.

These claims have also been taken up by the Social Democrats' education spokeswoman and former councillor on the Inner London Education Authority, Mrs Anne Sofer, who says two out of three schools in Camden and Westminster are without governing bodies. Schools in some inner London boroughs are even worse off, she believes.

The claims arise out of the ILEA's attempts to reconstitute all its governing bodies following last year's local elections. The difficulty has been "in everyone agrees - finding enough political appointees to fill all the vacancies. Where NAGM, Mrs Sofer and the ruling Labour group on the ILEA disagree, it is on who is to blame."

Following the May elections, the parent representation on all ILEA school governing bodies, a move which popular with the city's parent organizations. It also decided to increase the number of co-opted governors to include two representatives of the local black community on each school body.

But there is some cynicism among parents and non-political governors about Labour's decision to preserve the existing balance of power, by

increasing the number of political appointments to match the extra parent and black governors.

It is this decision which seems to have led to the nominating organizations - mostly local Labour parties, but also including some Conservative associations - running into trouble trying to find enough suitable candidates. More than half the 25,000 school governors in inner London are political nominees, under the rules drawn up by the ILEA.

Parent and staff governors, who have been ready to assume their duties

since elections took place in September, are now frustrated because they cannot take part in school management, according to Mrs Felicity Taylor, chairman of NAGM. "It has caused all sorts of problems, holding up appointments and upsetting newly elected parents and staff governors who are anxious to get going," she said.

Mrs Sofer said schools where governing bodies had yet to be reconstituted were suffering because governors needed to be consulted on all senior and key appointments and on major changes such as plans to introduce tertiary education.

Two schools left without a governing body this term are Kingsgate Junior and Infants, in the Camden and Westminster division. Mrs Rene Branton, nominated chair of the governors, said there had been no major difficulties. "The heads do talk to me about any problems that arise, but the only inconvenience is that the governing body has not been able to meet this term."

NAGM's claim that less than half of ILEA's 916 schools currently have reconstituted governing bodies is dismissed by the authority, which says between 70 and 80 per cent have now been reconstituted.

"We are contacting all nominating organizations again and have been doing so throughout the term in those places where they have not come forward," said a Labour group spokes-

## Education Development Scheme Study Awards

A number of Study Awards are to be offered by the Overseas Development Administration to enable candidates to enhance their qualifications by study or research and to widen their expertise to fit them for further employment within the Overseas Aid Programme or within related activities.

Applicants should be British Citizens below the age of 40 with a minimum of 8 years overseas experience in an aspect of education and should hold a degree and a professional teaching qualification. In certain circumstances these conditions may be waived for applicants who have been serving under the British Volunteer Programme, provided they have at least 2 years teaching experience in a developing country and hold the minimum academic and professional qualifications.

Awards customarily range from single term short courses to academic year degree courses and cover fees and provide an allowance towards living costs, books and stationery. The amount is determined by the circumstances of the candidate.

For further details and an application form, please write, quoting ref. AH386/BR/TES, to Overseas Development Administration, Room 328, Rensselaire House, Eaglesham Road, EAST KILBRIDE, Glasgow G76 8EA.

Closing date for applications is 1 March 1987.

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# Young majority that has a wrong way with words

After all the commotion about the number of Americans who cannot read, it should have come as no surprise to find that many of their children cannot write either - but it has.

## UNITED STATES

**Bill Norris reports a disturbing drift towards poor writing skills**

Written by a 14-year-old:  
"I think (sic) our school does not need a (sic) laboratory (sic) rule because some time ago people have to go and they would let you and then when your (sic) doing your work one of the teachers happen to get up and mosey on out to the restroom to go to the bathroom just after she or he told you your (sic) not aloud (sic) to go to the restroom."  
"Another (sic) rule I don't like is the Cafeteria (sic) rule that if (sic) their (sic) is something under your feet (sic) you have to pick it up and I think that is sick because sometime that stuff (sic) is not yours and its (sic) been stepped on are off (sic) and off (sic) and then Mr. Russel walks over and tell (sic) you to through (sic) it away And if (sic) you reFuss (sic) he makes you sit at the penalty (sic) table."

Among the 14-year-old eighth-graders, only 13.9 per cent were judged to have adequate writing performance. For fourth-graders, the figure fell to 5.9 per cent. For the oldest age group, who are one year from graduation, it was 19 per cent.

The report, which is aimed primarily at teachers, sees a link between students' writing problems and a "persistent lack of instructional emphasis on developing higher-order skills in all areas of the curriculum". It points to the need for better methods of instruction, recording that students who wrote three or more essays during a six-week period performed better than those who did no writing during that time.

There is little agreement on what should be done about the problem. Ms Mary Hatwood Futrell, the president of the National Education Association, said that parents should encourage children to read, keep diaries, write notes and make lists. She also wanted smaller class sizes and more time for marking papers, with secondary school staff relieved of non-teaching duties.

But Mr Shanker disagreed, claiming that such changes would be costly and would force the teaching profession to lower its standards. "The way out is to think of new ways to organize schools," he said. "We must move teachers away from lecturing students."

Instead, he suggested replacing lectures with books and technology, leaving teachers free to challenge student thinking and to coach them in writing. According to Mr John Maxwell, the executive director of the National Council of Teachers of English, however, even this may not do much good, because American teachers themselves are not up to the job.

He placed the blame on university English courses which tended to focus on literature rather than writing, and added: "Most secondary school English teachers are essentially unprepared to teach writing effectively, and elementary teachers are even less well prepared. Broad in-service education in how to change that situation should become a national priority."

Only 20 per cent of students write at an adequate level

## Reaganites seek new cuts

The Reagan administration, unopposed by past failures to persuade Congress that America should spend less on schools and universities, is once again proposing to ask for heavy cuts in its budget for 1988.

Mr William Bennett, the Education Secretary, is alone among his Cabinet colleagues in according to spending "suggestions" from the Office of Management and Budget, and has refused to ask for more money.

He is actually asking for much less: \$14.7 billion (\$10.35 million), which represents a cut of almost 25 per cent in federal spending on schools and universities. Last year, Mr Bennett requested \$15.2 billion, but Congress insisted on \$19.5 billion.

With the Democrats now holding sway in both houses, Mr Bennett is even less likely to succeed this time. Though the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings deficit-reduction law requires overall cuts of at least \$50 billion (or an equivalent increase in tax revenues), Congress is unlikely to take much, if anything, from education. Recent figures on American illiteracy and fears that the United States is losing its competitive position in the world, are more likely to move legislators in the opposite direction.

The education lobbyists are certainly unworried. Ms Susan Frost, the executive director of the Committee for Education Funding - a coalition of 90 organizations, said: "The administration's proposals have become more and more irrelevant. Congress, on a bipartisan basis, has made education a national priority. The President's budget won't be taken very seriously."

No details have been released about Mr Bennett's new proposals, but his deputy under-secretary, Mr Bruce Carnes, said last week that "philosophically, the budget will look more like what we requested in 1987 than what was finally appropriated."

"This means we'll place the greatest emphasis on disadvantaged populations, young kids, elementary and secondary programmes, and the handicapped."

Translated, this seems to mean that he will be asking for roughly level funding for so-called "chapter one" compensatory education, "chapter two" block grants, bilingual education and special education. Everything else, including student loans and vocational instruction, will be the targets of heavy cuts.

Last year, there was an attempt to slash the vocational appropriation by \$405 million. But Congress voted instead for a \$61 million increase, as part of a package which raised education spending - apart from student loans - by 11.4 per cent.

When Mr Reagan's budget reaches Capitol Hill on January 5, lawmakers will find that not everything has received the same cavalier treatment as education. Once again, for instance, more money is being demanded for defence. In the current political climate, that is not likely to be a popular move.

## Naked affront to holy orders

Teachers angry at new regulations on Italian religious education have asked for a new law to be put next to Godliness on the timetable.

A narrow majority of the school staff council in a Lombardy town near Monza voted to request formally the introduction of a course on "the history of eroticism from the 18th-century libertines to the present day."

The teachers - who suggest the lessons would be a suitable alternative for students opting out of RE - are protesting about the alleged failure of the Education Minister, Sig. Francesco Rutelli, to address ambiguities inherent in the new regulations.

According to the revised concordat between the Church and the State, Catholicism is no longer the official religion and its teaching, therefore, no longer obligatory.

The State, however, guarantees Catholic education to students wishing

to study it. In a subsequent regulation, the Ministry spelled out how this choice was to be made - but made only vague mention of "alternative subjects" for those declining the option - hence the possibility of Casanova on the curriculum.

The Christian Democrat minister's regulation was criticized on three counts. First, said liberal opponents, students should be allowed to choose for themselves and not have to delegate this to parents until they reached the age of 16.

Second, it was unacceptable rigidity to fix the choice at the beginning of each school cycle (elementary, secondary and upper secondary) with no possibility of a change of mind in the interim. Third, the rule should be established to conduct religious and

alternative classes at the beginning or end of the school day.

Though Parliament had been heatedly debating the issue for months, the original regulation, faults and ambiguities intact, automatically went into effect when registration time for the new school year came around. Only 5 per cent of students decided to opt out of RE.

While the minister's regulation called for "alternative subjects" for those who chose not to take religious education, no follow-up on how these were to be organized or who was to conduct them has yet ensued.

The regulation did specify, however, that they would be activated "upon request". And so it came to pass that the teachers' council decided on the subject of sin through the centuries as a fair alternative to the weekly religious hour.

Rita di Giuseppe

# Families happily fall in line over five-day week

Schools in the Soviet Union work six days a week, with regular classes on Sundays and with Sunday as the only day off.

Now Latvian schools are to switch to five-day week, and both teachers and children are overjoyed at the prospect of the change.

About 20 years ago, a five-day working week was introduced throughout the country. But a five-day school week never materialized. The years and cons of Saturday study were a constant subject of debate, and with the passing of the years and the new-governing curriculum, it was said that modern schoolwork could simply be crammed into a Monday-to-Friday timetable.

Finally, an experiment was launched in Latvia, and it has proved beyond all doubt that, apart from the new school helping pupils to absorb their textbook material, the two-day weekend does much to improve the relationship between children and parents.

The present decision still only covers primary schools, and six-year-olds will benefit during the present school year. On Saturdays, members of the school staff who would normally be having a day off will be available all the same for extra lessons when necessary, or for extra play games for any children that need a bit of help.

Latvia has a total population of 2,500,000 of whom 315,000 are children, attending more than 800 different schools. Latvian schoolchildren are known for their pioneering within the framework

## SOVIET UNION

**Jennifer Louis reports how Latvia is bucking a national trend**

of the school reform currently taking place in the Soviet Union. Last summer they opened their first kindergarten-school complex in the village of Taurene.

The construction was financed by the local collective farm and designed to take children aged three to 10, so that they would follow a specially-planned timetable running from the beginning of nursery school to the end of the primary years.

Similar complexes are also being tried in the neighbouring republics of Estonia and Byelorussia.

During the reform programme, the age of admission is being lowered from seven to six, and standard schools have been running into problems with the six-year-olds. This has not been on account of academic difficulties, but because the schools are run on lines that are just too advanced for the youngest ones.

So long as the children keep to the kindergarten régime of regular meals and an afternoon rest, all is well. Their health even improves when they start real school - so long as their timetable is unchanged.

Soviet schools have long periods of 45 minutes. Both class and homework is strictly marked, and a weekly report must be seen and signed by a parent. To minimize stress, the six-year-olds



Saturday fever: schools in Latvia have cut out one day a week.

have 25-minute lesson periods and no marks are given during the first year of school. Parents also appreciate not having to react to the weekly report.

These arrangements are easy enough to follow, but not all schools have the facilities for providing nursery meals and somewhere to rest - and somewhere to rest, to the people in the Soviet Ministry of Health, means providing real beds and not just rugs and cushions on the floor.

Moscow school no. 190 is among those admitting six-year-olds, and it is now badly overcrowded.

Planned for two pupils, a new house nearly 1,000. To meet the recommended arrangements for the youngest newcomers, part of the hall,

about 18 feet square had to be partitioned off as a dormitory into which 25 beds were squeezed.

There was no proper ventilation, nor any means of insulating it from the noise of the rest of the school going on all around. A similar section of the hall was allocated as a playroom. There were further difficulties in the dining room and the gym.

Education authorities are now beginning to agree that it might well be best to combine primary school and kindergarten, following the examples of Estonia, but it is going to mean a great deal of expenditure, and plenty of building.

# Trainees' courses off the ground

## CHINA

More than 120,000 students are following teacher training courses offered by China's new satellite education television channel.

China Education Television is broadcasting 17 hours of programmes every day. Eleven hours will be devoted to teacher training courses and the other six to adult education.

It is estimated that more than 200,000 students are using the new channel.

Experimental transmissions began in July this year, and already there are 480 ground receiving stations and 7,400 programme-receiving classrooms in full operation in 16 provinces across the country.

CETV's director, Sun Bai, said that around nine million (20 per cent) of China's primary and secondary school teachers are untrained, and the new channel was intended to help ease this problem.

Since 1979, educational television has played an increasingly important role in the further and higher education programme.

All of China's provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions, with the exception of Tibet, have set up a TV college of some kind.

Some 13,000 teachers have been employed to produce 400 courses in 80 subjects for no fewer than 1.64 million students. So far 610,000 students have graduated from TV courses.

The State Education Commission's vice-minister, He Dongchang, said that TV education had proved to be a practical and effective method of training a larger number of students in a conventional way.

Geoffrey Parkins

## LETTERS

# Quantity at the expense of quality

Sir - So now we know. Teaching is a second-rate career. How also can Sir Peter Swinnerton-Dyer's encouragement to university mathematics and physics departments to lower their already quite modest entrance requirements in order to attract potential teachers be interpreted?

His acknowledgement (YES, November 28) that courses will need to be modified for such students simply confirms this. Not only can they come in with lesser qualifications; they can also go out with what will inevitably be regarded as an inferior degree.

What a way to meet the demand to improve standards! Quantity at the expense of quality! But even this won't work. Anyone who has made the most

cursorious analysis of the UCCA clearing-house barrel knows that it has been well and truly scraped already by departments desperate to fill places. What is more, a level physics entries have suffered such an alarming decline over the past two years that it is doubtful that even gouging out the cracks in the barrel will make much difference.

Is Sir Peter ignorant of the already existing provision for this group within the public sector and the struggle those courses always have to recruit anything like viable numbers?

But even if this initiative were to be marginally successful at increasing the numbers contemplating teaching,

what impact will it have on other undergraduates? Isn't it at least plausible to suggest that the development of lower status courses for intending teachers will actually discourage others from coming into teaching? Given how marginal some of this group's decisions now are, the effect on quality could be catastrophic. (I am not saying it will be; just that the possibility ought to be considered before proceeding with this essentially naive initiative.)

It also needs to be pointed out that before becoming teachers these specially recruited graduates will need to undertake professional training. There is, of course, absolutely no guarantee that these graduates will be accepted

on to PGCE courses. Has Sir Peter thought this one through?

PGCE courses are being pressurized to raise standards, to improve the quality of the teaching force and to become accountable to external bodies in so doing. How can this be squared with an initiative which so obviously lowers these standards in the very areas of the curriculum in which we are being enjoined to improve them?

There are initiatives to be taken. This emphatically is not one of them!

BRYAN R CHAPMAN  
Centre for Studies in Science and Mathematics Education  
University of Leeds

## Integral part

Sir - I was interested to note (YES, November 28) that ILA pupils experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties are keen to integrate with the mainstream which has rejected, or more accurately ejected, them.

Those who are assessed as deaf or delicate and who would have had little or no opportunity to test their abilities in the mainstream would seem, from the survey, to be apprehensive, even fearful, of integration.

If this half-a-survey were to include the views of mainstream pupils on integration, what would the findings show, I wonder, and with what implication for work at the sharp end of policy on integration?

TONY HILL  
Perryman Hill  
Marlitt Lane  
Sutton  
Devon

## Special needs

Sir - The paradox examined in "Freedom to fail" (YES, December 5) is paralleled in the world of special educational needs. Brian Cox's suggestion that over-protected children will either react violently when confronted with the real world (wherever that is), is one provided by those who wish to see the demise of special schools and the mainstreaming of their pupils. Others among us feel that confidence boosting is a major concern, and that group situations and specialized resources, both human and material, which the positive discrimination of special schools can provide.

Like Brian Cox, I never felt rejected when turning out for the second or third team, and have even come to terms with the MCC's elitist attitude in ignoring my enthusiasm and insisting on ability as the criterion for selection. I should, however, have felt rejected had there been no team for me to play in.

Special schools can provide a stadium or theatre where handicapped children can achieve the personal excellence which Brian Cox and I strive for in playing for the third team. The pupils who play the lead in a school play or become chess champion will have pushed themselves hard to achieve excellence and in tasting success they will grow in confidence.

We are forever joining the "real world" - toddlers, for example, when they leave their mothers for nursery school, or school-leavers when they become employed or join the dole queue. Special school pupils, it is argued, must join the real world of mainstream education. In truth, one part of the world is as real as another, and we shall do handicapped children a disservice if we destroy a part of it, and, in so doing, limit their freedom to succeed.

MARK LITTLE  
1 Backer Close  
Stitchley  
Telford  
Shropshire

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Taking liberties: Casanova is poised to enter the alternative curriculum.



## Soul searcher

Sir - As the editor of *Anti-Racism* - an *Assault on Education and Values* may I point out that Julia Neuberger's review (TES, December 5) is seriously misleading. Linda Hall's "useful points about language" are supposedly illustrated by her reference to *The Pilgrim's Progress*. But this reference belongs to A C Capey's essay about literary censorship. Not only does it therefore have a different point, but it belongs to one of the essays Rabbi Neuberger implies is not worth "serious consideration".

This serious confusion, together with the fact that she gives no clear idea of the range of topics we cover, suggests a hasty, superficial acquaintance with the text. And it is not hasty but presumption which leads her to ascribe "deeply held [racist?] prejudices" to some contributors. By what right does Rabbi Neuberger lay claim to know the innermost secrets of other men's souls? By what right does she presume that only one contributor (Tom Hastie) speaks from the heart? Certainly political views are expressed. But, like Tom Hastie, those who



Divisive colour consciousness no aid to racial harmony

express them do so openly. And I for one am not sure what my "hidden agenda" is supposed to be. A glance at the current *Use of English*, in which I attack the narrow instrumentalism of both Right and Left, will confirm that it is education, not politics, that concerns me.

Her innuendoes clearly indicate the obstacle to free speech that enables questionable policies to be introduced into the curriculum with little fear of opposition from the circumpect, the timid and the upwardly mobile. And her concluding accusation that we do

not indicate how anti-racism could be implemented shows that she has ignored, rather than rebutted, our distinction between "anti-racism" and "non-racism": our central contention being that racial harmony is best served not by divisive colour consciousness but by a wider respect for persons that transcends race or sex.

FRANK PALMER  
c/o The Sherwood Press  
88 Tynley Road  
London E7

Julia Neuberger writes: Frank Palmer is right in rebuking me for attributing to Linda Hall A C Capey's lovely reference to *The Pilgrim's Progress*. I apologise unreservedly. But he is not correct in accusing me of "a hasty, superficial acquaintance with the text". I read the book from cover to cover, took copious notes (it was in the notes that the confusion between Hall's references and Capey's occurred), and found an enormous amount to say about it, much of which had to be omitted for reasons of space.

Nor do I make "innuendoes". I spell out some of the hatred which appeared in the book - for instance of Dr

Sivanandan, and of the Revs Brooks and Beswick. I also found it surprising that, in a book so concerned with the use of words by the anti-racists, "immigrants" was used by two authors for people mostly born in the UK, and the highly derogatory "fraternal factions of the lumpen left" was allowed to go in unedited.

Dr Palmer, in his essay, argues passionately for "love of the beauty of the world", for "a concern for truth", for education that is not about hatred. I have no quarrel with that thesis - but I find it surprising that in his editing he did not challenge the hatred so often expressed by his contributors.

Of course racial harmony is "best served" by a wider respect for persons that transcends their race or sex. But then we should have seen that respect for persons - including those with whom the authors disagree - in this volume. It is for that reason that many of the essays, though by no means all, seem to me to be part of the political battle between anti-racists and anti-anti-racists - and sadly lacking in constructive suggestions for improving education in this area in schools.

## AS requested?

Sir - I thank Mr Blackburn for pointing out the weakness in my "alibi" analogy on AS mathematics (TES, December 5) - I, alas, found the two challenges equally impossible. Mr Attwood's comments, however, are by no means entirely in opposition to mine. We are agreed that it is the length of syllabus and the examination questions that defeat so many A level candidates. I believe the short-term answer lies in a limited-grade mathematics A level, rather than in an AS which might have little currency in mathematics, physics and engineering departments and which would not be so easily administered in schools.

So far as breadth (and arts students) is concerned, may I point out that most of the TES quotations were taken from a paper written for the Secondary Examinations Council which emphasized the need to bring English 16-19 education into line with that in other countries. "In particular, this means a broader sixth-form with less specialisation. This may mean some mathematics for all".

However, the country is currently faced with a disastrous shortage of mathematics teachers.

As one brought up on principal and subsidiary subjects at Higher School Certificate level, I can hardly view AS levels as a major step forward in the reform of sixth-form education. Nevertheless, it would be unfortunate if the problems of introducing them into schools were compounded by fears concerning university admission. I am assured that the report of UCCA's Reading meeting was somewhat misleading.

So far as the School Mathematics Project is concerned we shall certainly offer an AS level syllabus if that is the wish of the schools which use our materials. To date there has been no such demand.

GEOFFREY HOWSON  
Director  
Centre for Mathematics Education  
University of Southampton

## Powerless forum

Sir - I was somewhat surprised to read the article by Ian Nash "New doubts raised over AS levels" (TES, November 21). It stated: "At a recent meeting of the Universities Central Council on Admissions in Reading... The only meeting held in Reading this year has been an UCCA schools' conference. The schools' conferences are organized to provide headteachers and careers advisers in the area who prepare candidates for university entry with an opportunity to ask questions about the UCCA scheme and related matters. It is not a forum in which UCCA policy is discussed or decided."

I have been through the notes of the conference and can only find a factual account of the views that have been widely circulated by the Standing Conference on University Entrance and the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals giving general support to AS levels.

UCCA is not in a position to have a view on AS levels. It is our job to ensure that the views of the universities as expressed in the CVC publication "AS Levels and University Entrance" are correctly interpreted.

P A OAKLEY  
General secretary  
The Universities Central Council on Admissions  
Cheltenham, Glos

## Distance learning

Sir - I was very concerned to read about Cheshire's decision to clamp down on out-county special school placements (TES, December 12).

Unfortunately, because speech and/or language disordered children have so little provision, authorities are often forced to make expensive out-county placements to execute their duty imposed by the 1981 Education Act.

If only the local education authorities would ensure that specialist teaching and intensive speech therapy were available in their areas, they could avoid much out-county placement expense, and much heartache for parents who are forced to send children five years of age to schools hundreds of miles from home.

MOIRA NOBLE  
Education Officer  
Association For All Speech Impaired Children  
347 Central Markets, London EC1

## Every day should be an open day

Sir - Your leader (TES, December 5) summarized very accurately the present position of teacher appraisal in the current educational debate.

You highlighted the fact that the need of primary schools has never been seriously tackled and it would seem that the problem will not be helped if the ACAS pay and conditions package is adopted. With every member of staff in most primary schools, except the head and deputy, likely to be on the Main Professional Grade the curriculum responsibilities are likely to be even more blurred in the anticipated collegiate approach. This will make it essential for all teachers to

heighten their awareness of the need for self-appraisal.

If there is an honest examination of what is happening inside the classroom and how it has fitted into the whole - school approach to educating children, staff will also have to become more open with each other. The increased awareness of the whole-school requirements as well as knowledge of the needs of individual children should also lead staff to ask: "How am I doing?"

At this stage discussion with a colleague which includes the head-teacher could lead into further appraisal. This, in turn, could throw up

additional needs such as an in-service requirement or an input into professional development.

All of this will require time, and buying time from local authorities or governments is not as easy as buying more tangible goods, such as computers and video recorders. As all good primary teachers will confirm, time is a difficult master to observe even with attempts at keeping to strict schedules. Projects tend to develop in unexpected ways and throw off course the best intentions as a new and apparently better approach is revealed. This could happen when observing teachers at work or in subsequent interviews as

appraisal is undertaken by people attempting it for the first time.

If a situation is eventually reached where children are benefiting and teachers have greater job satisfaction then the exercise will have been worthwhile. We will have become more professional, but this cannot be done on the cheap, for to fail to fund this project correctly would lead to further lowering of morale.

B HURN  
Headteacher  
Tollgate county junior school  
Winston Crescent  
Eastbourne, East Sussex

## Hemlock effect

Sir - In your excellent editorial on the six appraisal pilots "Following the Suffolk signposts" (TES, December 5) you indicate important issues still to be addressed: ineffective heads (and deputies), the small primary, observation, training, new and realistic resources; yes, answers will be eagerly awaited. I agree, above all, that the key task "is to develop appraisal systems that will encourage teachers to try out new ways of enhancing their teaching and generally to raise their

signs, rather than retreating into safe and limited aims."

It is most unfortunate, therefore, that your news report in the same issue refers to the pilots as "teacher assessment schemes". I thought everyone bar Croydon and the popular press had moved on from the era of "teaching quality" and "quality in schools" in which "appraisal" and "assessment" were interchangeable indiscriminately. To perpetuate, however inadvertently, the idea that teacher effectiveness can be measured - so firmly rejected by the Suffolk team - is at best misleading and will do little to reassure

those teachers who remain unconvinced that appraisal will have the Hemlock effect on them. Nothing could be more calculated to ensure that teaching remains "safe and limited" - and dull.

This is not a semantic issue. Call it evaluation or review if you like, though the appraisal process, as the ACAS guidelines clearly state, is more than either. But assessment, except as a determinant for entry to the Main Professional Grade and as one purpose of the Croydon scheme, is most certainly not. The Croydon pilot after all should have no more than a one-in-

six chance of influencing the final national guidelines and it is to be hoped that the eminently sound developmental principles of the other five will carry their due weight.

You say in your editorial "All the work on teacher appraisal so far shows what a complex business it is and how easy it would be to antagonize teachers in a self-defeating way." Quite.

MICHAEL PENNINGTON  
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## Computer ease

Sir - Barry Fox (TES, November 28 and December 5) does a good job in demystifying Domesday. Interactive Video, Optical and CD and LV ROM Memory systems, and possible future technological developments, but in relating this to school education he, like many, is starting from the wrong end.

Domesday itself, despite its huge technological achievement and its obvious elegance, is a good example of this tendency. Ignoring its price, the initial conception failed to ask two mundane but crucial questions: "Do schools need it?" and "Do schools want it?" Add to this the way in which the software is locked into a particularly expensive delivery system, it makes one wonder whether any lessons have been learned at all from the earlier experience of microcomputer introduction to schools?



What schools actually need is not a Rolls-Royce but a Morris Minor, and they only need that if it is the best affordable answer to a clear educational problem, or at least significantly enhances teachers' and pupils' teaching and learning capabilities. The fact that Barry Fox dismisses VHD videodisc for schools, despite the fact that Japanese schools are already using it, and does not even mention interactive video, like systems which are

actually being used in some UK schools, suggests little knowledge of the market he is assuming.

We hear of the impending piloting of "prescribed" interactive videodiscs (technology-led DTT projects?) which are to research the acceptability of a product system, but where is the essential pre-research to find out what user problems exist that interactive videodisc and the rest could usefully address in a cost-effective way?

The "work-station" approach with bells and whistles might be the technologist's dreamchild, but there is not a shred of evidence to suggest that it is "school acceptable", coupled with the fact that one work-station in a school (who could possibly afford more?) is a nonsense anyway, and this suggests that the current trend to little more than technological masturbation.

As far as interactive video and schools is concerned, focusing on hardware is not what the debate should be about. The essential issue is software, particularly ways of making software that is so good it will sell itself to schools. So long as the hardware delivery system is affordable and able to do the job, few will be interested in its technological minutiae.

COLIN MABLY  
Principal lecturer in education  
North East London Polytechnic  
Holbrook Road  
London E15

## Fixture fixation

Sir - Once again a totally one-sided argument on physical education versus sport is put forward by Burt Lodge (TES, November 21). He reports a "decrease in fixtures" and "no significant improvement" in extra-curricular provision.

Gone are the days when I would spend Friday afternoon begging boys to turn out for the school after only nine attended the lunchtime practice. At present we are running successful extra-curricular clubs in a number of activities, which are attended by four times the number of pupils previously.

catered for by team practices alone. This requires equal if not more commitment by physical education staff in the running of activities such as gymnastics, dance, fitness work, informal competitions, open clubs and so on, as well as limited competitive sport.

These activities encompass all of the aims of physical education, rather than reverting to a narrow, misplaced belief in fixtures.

B MARTIN  
Head of physical education  
Brixham Community College  
Devon

## Arty facts

Sir - I have been seconded by my authority and the DES for this academic year to look at art in the primary school and to illuminate a profile of activities within this county and in other authorities.

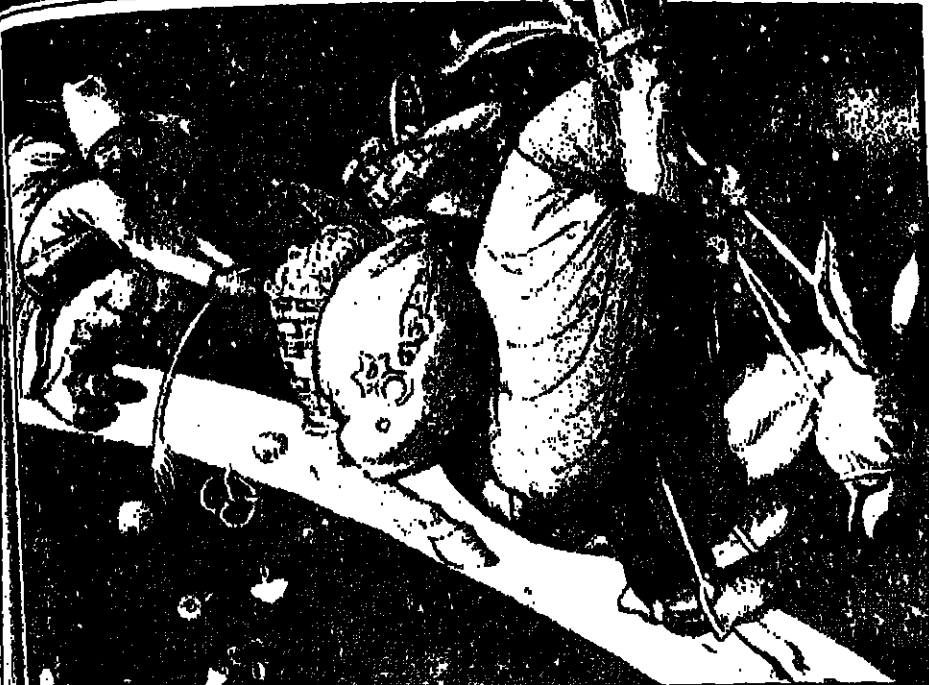
In the attempt to draw attention to the quality of drawing and the more individual experience afforded by artistic activity, teachers have encouraged the discipline approach to observational work - something to the neglect of the imaginative.

The primary teacher is now being faced with the need to be aware of the

design-based rationale and to understand the relationship that art and craft has with that broad design spectrum that embraces many subjects and areas of the curriculum.

My task is to produce a record of the art/craft-based rationale as it exists in good practice within the primary curriculum. To this end I would like to hear about schools where art is used across the curriculum or where there is a strong tradition of learning through art.

R E PEDLER  
Hill Farm Cottage  
Langwood, Fen Drove  
Chatteris, Cambs



Nicholas, 19-century Dutch bringer of gifts.



Engraving of Martin Luther, said to be the originator of Christmas tree lights.

## The Christmas chronicle

Iola Smith delves into the festive season's archive

According to the North American Hopi Indians, the Christmas story was told by a thunderbird to the braves, not by angels to shepherds. For the Cherokee it was three chiefs, not wise men, who brought gifts to the baby Jesus. And in Burkina, West Africa, where it's taboo for a man to be present during a baby's birth, there is a belief that Joseph was out searching for food when the Christ-child was born.

These cultural variations on the Biblical theme are some of the traditions being researched and recorded by Christmas Archives International. With over 100,000 artefacts, ranging from Christmas cards, decorations and cribs, to an extensive book and picture library, the Cardiff-based archive provides information and inspiration for schools, craftsmen and television programme makers.

Ran by cordon-bleu cook turned historian Countess Maria von Stauffer, and her artist husband Count Andrezej, whose ancestors ruled in Austria in the 15th century, it is the outcome of 20 years' research into the traditions, festivities and folklore of Christmas.

Christmas cribs are a particular interest, and the von Stauffers have a collection of 400 examples reflecting the folk art of 60 countries.

"Our Polish crib, for example, is modelled on Krakow Cathedral, complete with turrets, while the East German pyramid shaped version uses candle power to enable the figures to revolve," said Maria. "This crib is a direct descendant of the 18th century German 'spinner', a wooden chandelier decorated with strings of glass beads to represent a spider's web. It depicts the legend of Mary, Joseph and the baby hiding in a cave on their way to Egypt, while a spider wove a web across the entrance to convince Herod's men that the cave was empty."

This is one of the many Christian Apocrypha giving religious interpretations to natural phenomena. Although banned by the Catholic Church, the stories remain part of Russian Orthodox lore. They include the legends explaining why robins have a red breast and nightingales sing in the evening: a robin fanned the flames of a tiny fire to keep the baby warm; the nightingale sang a lullaby. Rosemary is said to flower at Christmas because Jesus' swaddling clothes were spread out to dry on the bush.

Many of the present traditions of the Yule log, visiting friends and giving gifts pre-date Christianity, says Maria von Stauffer. "Pretty boxes" containing images of the Holy Family were exhibited in Yorkshire until this century by children singing carols in exchange for pennies. In pre-Christian days, too, children received gifts for showing their pretty boxes.

"Some Celtic Christmas time folklore also has a pagan origin. The Mari Lwyd (or Grey Mare) of Wales was initially a means of casting out evil spirits from the house, with the horse and its spirits entering through the front door and retreating through the back door and the back, driving out the spirits before it through the back. This is echoed in Sweden by a great running through cities, and by the old women, Befana, of the Tyrol riding on a broomstick to sweep

people's doorsteps before bringing gifts."

The best known gift bringer of all, around whom numerous myths have grown, is St Nicholas of Myra, the real Santa Claus. This fourth-century bishop who became the patron saint of children is reputed to have become a priest while still a teenager, and then devoted much of his life to the poor. Gifts stockings are traced back to the legend in which he put bags of gold in the

slavery by their father. Dutch legends developed the religious theme - the saint came as a gift bringer to Holland. Then European immigrants took the myth across the Atlantic to the United States, where they corrupted the Dutch name for St Nicholas - Sinter Klaas - into Santa Claus, the familiar, fairy tale character of today.

The Christmas tree, first seen in Strasbourg in the sixteenth century, had numerous fore-runners. In pre-Norman days, Christmas was known as Adam and Eve's Day rather than Christ's Mass or first day, and it was customary to decorate an Adam and Eve tree. Paper flowers recalled their innocence, an apple symbolised temptation, and shining objects illustrated the Fall. Then came the Jesse tree, based on the shape of a Jewish candelabrum, and decorated with religious symbols.

The Strasbourg Christmas tree had paper flowers, gingerbread biscuits and glass beads. Later, the bakers of Nuremberg made and painted wax models to hang on the trees. The most popular was an angel shaped model, the fore-runner of today's Christmas tree fairy.

Christmas Archives' research suggests that Martin Luther was the originator of Christmas tree lights. He was supposedly walking in a forest at night, saw stars twinkling through the trees and thought that they personified God's light in a dark world. Wanting to illustrate this point to his children, he placed candles on a fir tree, and so began the tradition.

"The turkey is a fairly new tradition, dating back to America. Previously, rich Europeans had feasted on beef and bear's head, while the poor made do with a goose fattened up in their own back yard. But plum pudding hails back to Hannukah the Jewish festival of light, when a plum porridge of meat, wheat, spices and fruit was eaten. Either the redpe, or the food itself, was brought from Israel to Europe by the crusaders in medieval times."

Many of the von Stauffer's collection of legends and cribs come from Europe rather than Britain. Both the traditions and the art of crib making were suppressed by the Puritans. But the von Stauffer's hope to revive the craft skills through the Society of Nativists which was established to bring together Christmas historians, schools and craftsmen. Next year, the Society will run a competition to design the best British crib with categories for children as well as professional craftsmen.

The Christmas Archive, Wassall House, 64 Severn Road, Canton, Cardiff, CF1 9EA.



Christmas card (1890); one of 30,000 in the Cardiff archive.

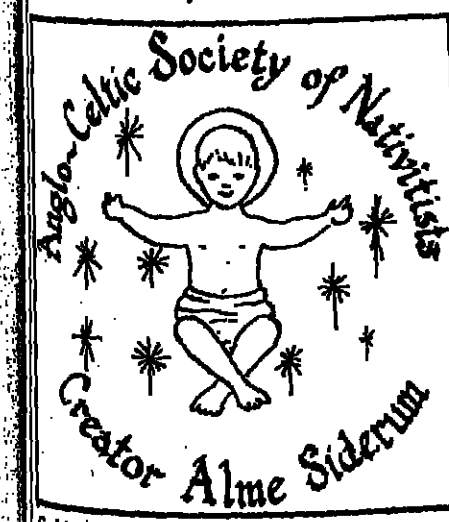


Victorian commemorative postal print.



Cut-out Wise Man from early 19th-century German Paper Nativity.

Early Christmas card from the USA.



Emblem of the Society of Nativists.



Knecht Ruprecht or Black Peter, St Nicholas' child-frightener.





To Russia with love: Samantha Smith's Moscow press conference



Eamon Birke



From the British entry, Peace in our Town

## 'How do you spell Gorbatsch?'

Leila Berg looks at the film which won the UN peace prize

To mark 1986 as the United Nations International Year of Peace, 26 countries agreed to make a half-hour film or television programme about peace. In Australia, Pam Williams was given the job by the Australian Film Commission. And it was her film that has just been awarded the United Nations media peace prize.

Not wanting to make a film full of statistics or pronouncements by experts, she cast about instead for other ways of approaching it. In an Australian newspaper she noticed an advertisement by an 11-year-old boy. He invited all children who wanted to avert a nuclear war to write to him. He would then, he said, make a scroll of all the signatures and take it to the right, important people.

She decided to track this child down, though not without some misgivings. If he proved to be pressured or inspired by a politically-motivated family, she intended to reject it as an idea for the film. But when she met Eamon Birke, he turned out to be a pleasant unassuming Irish-Australian, with a hard-working father, a very supportive mother, two younger brothers and a sister. Eamon had seen a film about Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and was earnestly determined to do something about it.

She made him her subject, not knowing what would come of his letter, but simply prepared to turn up with a camera whenever Eamon let her know something was likely to happen.

Mum, how do you spell Gorbatsch? Is the film

that resulted. Eamon never managed to say the name correctly.

It records, plainly and simply how, after hundreds of children had replied to him, Eamon set about, with letters, phone calls and journeys, taking their plea to governments. Bill Hayden, then Australian Prime Minister, was very warm and friendly to him, and invited him to Canberra, where they talked together.

Eamon also wrote to President Reagan. What looked like an impersonal handout came back from the United States, speaking of the need for negotiating from strength; it was ostensibly a letter from the President, but in the space left for a signature no one had signed. Eamon was badly disappointed.

Then a letter arrived from the Russian premier Gorbachov: a warm, apparently personal letter, which amazed Eamon, and which ended with an invitation to come to the Soviet Union to talk to other children who felt just the same.

At this point, the commercial television Channel 7 in Australia, agreed to buy the film and Film Australia decided to fund Eamon and Pam Williams to go to the Soviet Union, thereby turning the half-hour film into an hour's television programme.

They stayed in the Soviet Union for a fortnight,

and Pam Williams continued to film. Eamon met and talked with children through an interpreter - but even when the interpreter wasn't there, they found ways of understanding. Pam Williams says it was the most difficult job she has ever had to do, because the Soviet people - adults and children, official and unofficial - made no attempt to win her, the adult film-maker; it was Eamon they were interested in. She often learned where he was at the last moment and had to frantically hunt for transport to catch up with him. When they left for Australia, Eamon and the hordes of children who said goodbye were in tears.

This is not only a moving film about peace and war. It also demonstrates the competence, the capability in the real world, of unmanipulated children.

Although it is not featured in the film, Eamon's visit coincided with the anniversary of Samantha Smith's Soviet trip. Samantha Smith was the American child who came to the Soviet Union on a similar quest to Eamon's, but who was later killed in a plane crash. There are, monuments and large bill-board photographs of her all over the Soviet Union. And Samantha's mother and her entire school class came back to commemorate her peace mission.

There are now hopes that BBC Television may

show Pam Williams's film and that a distribution firm will make it available to organizations and individuals here. I witnessed its first showing in Sydney, and afterwards the studio received a record number of letters and phone calls.

For the United Nations International Year of Peace, the United States of America made a film saying the nuclear winter won't be as bad as people think, and that everyone will want to share America's space technology. But this has already been so badly received that another is being made about building bridges between countries.

The Soviet film is about astronauts throughout the world forming a club to protect the earth. It took me a while to track down the British film, *Peace in our Town*, about four members of a Camden Town youth club. It is made by the International Broadcasting Trust - a small, poorly-funded independent group, like most of the people making these films. It may soon be seen on Channel 4, with the other films. It may also be on hire from Concord Films, Ipswich.

Mum, how do you spell Gorbatsch? is not, by any means, the only documentary in the series to feature children. But it will be interesting to see how many are about unmanipulated children moving with their own energy, on their own track, with their own idea.

Enquiries about Pam Williams' film to the Australian Film Commission (telephone 01-734 9383).

## The pointlessness principle

Competitive or not, where's the sense in school sport? asks Charles Hill

So the newest craze in education is to eliminate competitive games from schools? When I was at primary school, we didn't have such things anyway. We had drill, which meant standing in lines wearing crossbands like Morris dancers, stretching and bending on the spot and, towards the end of the lesson, a few mad moments of bliss running zig-zag relay races through the lines.

By the time I was in the juniors the London County Council under the influence of the folk song and dance movement and had taken up country dancing. In spite of the crossbands, they didn't teach us Morris. They didn't teach us any of the party dances either. I suppose the theory was that learning the Lancers or varieties of Highland reel might have given us ideas above our station. The principle of pointlessness in education was already established.

We didn't have any playing fields but every now and again, we were taken down to the country. We went all the way to Kidbrooke, which must have been all of seven or eight miles.

There we used to dabble with cricket. The real object of the exercise was to get our into the fresh air. I don't think it had ever occurred to anyone, teachers or pupils, that we might have played a game against another school. We simply didn't associate school with competitive games. If you seriously wanted to play football or whatever it was then you joined one of the clubs run by the church or the mission or the Cubs.

By the time I went to grammar school, the bombing had forced us out of London. I remember my poor mother was appalled by the list of equipment I had to have for compulsory games. We had rugby in the winter and cricket in the summer. We didn't have much in the way of slides or cross-country until the younger staff came back from the war. We didn't have much in the way of competitiveness either until the war was over.

I don't blame them for their enthusiasm. At that time, I can understand, as a former serviceman, that they had been massively conditioned by military schemes of physical training which had two quite separate purposes.

On the one hand, there was the obvious need to bring men to a state of high physical fitness. On the other, there was the specific war-time problem of maintaining morale among masses of men who spent most of their time waiting for something to happen. It was the armies-in-waiting which allocated time and effort to competitive sports.

I had just finished my fourth year when the atomic bombs exploded over Japan. Staff returned with remarkable rapidity and proceeded to fit us into shape. I wasn't a "weed", as they used to say. My idea of fun was a 50 or 60-mile spin on

my bike. I swam well and I was a good table tennis player thanks to the Y M C A. I liked walking too. I wasn't a bad rugby player either, although I very rarely enjoyed it.

Those PE maniacs couldn't have cared tuppence for my cycling or my table tennis. Rugby was the thing and, cruelly, I allowed myself to be cozened into playing for school teams. I knew that, if I were to become a "notable" product of the school and get the references that might lead me to university, I needed to be a member of the first XV.

I still didn't like rugby. Running around when you're wet, cold and muddy is not my idea of fun. Under certain circumstances you may have to do it. But if you think that it's fun, you are well on the way to being certified. Perhaps that's it. Perhaps PE people should be certified. What sort of a person is it that believes throwing a spear is important? It isn't even as if you actually throw the spear at a target. And there's this thing they now call the triple jump, which we used to call the hop, skip and a jump. How can grown men and women treat it with such seriousness? Those who do it, those who train them, and those who broadcast about it?

There's no harm in running and leaping and throwing cannon balls or whatever if you do it for fun. There's no harm in it as entertainment. But does it really matter if our athletics can throw cannon balls further than their Russian opponents?

The thing that has always bothered me is that the boys at my rate never seem to learn any physical activity they can keep going when they leave school. The girls at our sister grammar school learned how to play tennis. We didn't. So a major point of social contact was lost, and for those who couldn't afford to belong to tennis clubs the opportunity was lost forever. You can play tennis with one other person, male or female. You can only go on playing rugby or soccer if you join a team and abandon your wife on Saturday afternoons.

I really do wonder sometimes if all these competitive sports in schools serve any end other than to employ PE staff. Is it possible that the real objective is to feed performers into the spectator sport industry? If that is the case, why do all pupils have to take part?



Rugby: "cold, wet and muddy"



Drill dominated the pre-war primary, not competitive games.

## Dispelling the myths

Teachers must give homosexuality a positive image, Elizabeth Osborne argues

Some parents' fears are unfounded - you can no more teach someone to be gay than you teach them to be black or white. They either are or aren't. However, you can teach them that they are of equal worth. By fostering mutual understanding and respect between various sections of society, we may be able to avoid some of the prejudices and extremes to which ignorance and prejudice can lead. If this is not done in the schools, then where? In my experience, we cannot always rely on the family, for whatever reasons, and certainly not on the media.

Children do not hear about homosexuality and lesbianism for the first time in classrooms. They encounter them in the media, talk about them in the playground, perhaps even experience them in their own lives. Very often they receive garbled messages and are ignorant or confused. Promoting knowledge and understanding of a lifestyle is not the same as advocating it. Indeed, it is not my responsibility as a teacher to suggest that any particular sexual orientation is more or less desirable. I am merely concerned with pupils' own sense of worth and their attitudes towards others.

Throughout my teaching career, I have discussed homosexuality and lesbianism openly and honestly with my pupils. Young children, in my experience, will accept quite unconcernedly that some mothers and fathers live with and love others of the same gender. It is not an idea which we are imposing - it is a fact of life, sometimes of their lives. We do not discuss the mechanics of the relationship any more than we discuss the mechanics of any relationship, that would be premature and pointless. Nor do we spring it on them out of context. If it is mentioned, it is as part of a general discussion on families, with no more emphasis or comment than on any other family set-up.

With adolescents, it is sometimes necessary to dispel a few spurious myths and confusions. Again, it forms part of a more general sex education programme or, as often happens, in response to classroom comment. I personally find the word "poor" as offensive as terms of racial abuse and expressions which degrade women, and will always try to explain why. I cannot believe that I have created any homosexuals or lesbians in this way, but I hope that any of my adolescent pupils who felt that this might be their way of life were reassured by my assertions that for those for whom it is right, it is not wrong.

A significant proportion of the school population will grow up to be gay. The fact that some people find this disagreeable is not, going to

change this. Sexual awareness and preference can start young and we cannot conveniently ignore this. It is also quite likely that some adolescents will change their allegiances. The "crush" on an older pupil of the same gender is a familiar theme in literature. Sometimes it is a phase, in other cases it is not. Pupil need to know this. Factual information can be reassuring and help to promote confidence in one's own discoveries and choices.

Some parents have a fear and disgust of homosexuality and believe it to be morally wrong. Some parents are racist, and some are sexist. I think they are wrong, but my personal views, although it would be foolish to deny their influence, must be held in check with regard to my teaching. It is my job to explain alternative views rather than to impose them, and to encourage pupils to challenge ideas if necessary, but above all to learn reason and tolerance.

Haringey has been accused of trying to undermine family life and of flying in the face of Christian teaching. Such accusations are unreasonable and short-sighted. The nuclear family and the Christian church remain on offer to those that choose them. If the tenets of either conflict with the instincts of an individual, then the battle takes place within that individual and not in the classroom. It can be an agonizing choice for some and I cannot sympathize with any institutions which seek to compound the difficulty with misguided insinuations of guilt and disgust. Teachers have a responsibility, together with parents, to ensure that the choices which pupils have to make are informed ones.

Elizabeth Osborne teaches in Haringey.

## Jumbies abroad!

by Nancy Kilburn

It wasn't a winter's morn, and it wasn't a stormy day. But the Jumbies were abroad - and all was excitement and learning and talk at The Heights County first school, Buckinghamshire. "County Pizar!" The hall is full of senior pupils, hiding behind giant fish, ethereal faces and strange food - wonderful features of a land far away.

Ah, here they come, the young children whose school it is. There's something strange about their entrance. They're in an invisible boat - going to sea in a sieve. Their faces are expectant, puzzled, vies with excitement and just a flicker of apprehension. Can this really be the hall, the big room they come into each day? Even those who have only been pupils for a couple of months are there, paddling their way in the shade of the mountains brown.

They hear a voice as they come in, a safe voice they know, setting the scene and catching their tentative exhilaration. It whispers about a beautiful

pea-green veil, and tells of a crockery jar. They respond in different ways: some are bold, looking to take the lead; some are curious, craning and peering to miss nothing. Just a few are shy, and wonder if they are secure.

They must be safe though. Their teacher, Mrs Harland, is with them. But what is she doing? She has become a Jumble, with a strange Torrible name. She is talking to the strangers, emerging now all around. Who are they? What do they want? They are the "Sign-posters", and they want to talk to the children, but they are shy. Even though they are so big they need to be reassured. Poor things - they can't speak, so sign language has to be used. Growing in confidence the reception children point and beckon, smile, and nod, and make excited questions about the hills of the Chankley Bore.

Magic is in the air, a wonderful curative spell which suddenly gives the Sign-posters speech. Conversations begin, animated exchanges between little Jumbies and giant Sign-posters, both fully in character. "What do you do?" "What is it like?" "Why do you sound like the coppery-gong?"

The Sign-posters take them round the island, clambering over the rocks - but taking great care not to go near the deep lake where the monsters dwell. In one corner of the island musicians play strange and mystical tunes - fitting improvisations of mood and tempo. All night long they journey, and another day, and a second night. Then they come to a hill, and magic music, soothing power, lulls them into safe sleep. The Sign-posters tell wonderful stories of how they

came to the Western Sea, and the Jumbies listen intently.

An hour has passed. Suddenly Brenda says that she feels homesick. One girl who has been hiding near a door comes over to her. "Let's go home." But much has happened in 60 minutes. Most of the Jumbies don't want to go back. They want to stay with the Sign-posters. Little and big, "First" and "Secondary" hand in hand, are making and sharing magic together. A small group, plus the band of allies they paddle away.

Those of us who had been privileged to watch this improvisation had sensed a real magic, beyond anything which Edward Lear had intended. The proof of its power lingered, as everyone, young and old, showed their reluctance to leave it. For just a little while we had seen at first hand the strength of young children's imaginations and the bonds which grow out of a shared adventure.

Preparation for the special time together had been thorough. It grew out of an idea which took shape at a termly liaison meeting in which all Buckinghamshire schools participate. We wanted to concentrate on the good things which happen in schools. So much of the previous winter had been difficult and tense, but even so schools had gone on and people had been learning together. Now we wanted to try to redress the balance.

We decided to take the schools into the work in libraries, shops and the like. Different liaison groups in the High Wycombe Division,

responded in individual ways. The schools in the Brenchwood secondary school catchment area decided to concentrate on drama. They wanted to bring together children of all ages for an experience where they would learn side by side. It wasn't an easy aim to realize, but it was well worth while.

Work went on throughout the term. Pupils from the secondary school, with their teacher Sally Withington - whose idea the drama had been - had visited the first school and had shared in drama lessons. They had listened to and watched the younger children. Other children had been involved in art and music lessons. The advisory drama teacher, Brenda Eaton, had spent much time with the class teacher as the idea of using the poem "The Jumbies" became a reality. The theme was used wherever possible, so that the children met in all sorts of ways - the science of the dove, floating and sinking; how to make Stilton cheese; monkeys, owls and pigs. And then the day came.

So it was that I visited The Heights County first school, one morning last term. What I saw and enjoyed had been quite unhearsable, but the children, young people and teachers it had brought together had had the separation of their years truly bridged. Far and few were the distractions of winter, and, as teachers and advisers left, the magic behind everyone said, "How tall they've grown!"

Nancy Kilburn is a senior adviser in Buckinghamshire.



## CITY COLLEGES

## What all parents want

Ian Poole

After reading the two articles in the issue of November 21 by Paul Graham and Maurice Plaskow stating their views on the proposed establishment of City Technology Colleges, I feel bound to express my dismay at the air of doom and gloom which seems to pervade every and any innovation in teaching. The inference in Mr Plaskow's article that: "Teachers and parents are right to be healthily sceptical of glossy promotions offering colourful new choices," would seem to assume my agreement with him in both categories, and as the definition of "scepticism" implied is one of mere destructive criticism, I feel that someone ought to offer an alternative view.

Both contributors blissfully ignore the reasons for such innovations in the first place. Ideas like this only thrive in the fertile soil of a discontented public, a public who feel that the existing system does not reflect their aspirations for their children. Mr Graham may well claim that the problems of the comprehensive system can be cured by more cash, but how will that comfort parents, not all "working Tories", who find that what is on offer, no matter how well financed, is not what they had hoped for?

Surely we must reject this repetitive red herring of under-financed schools for what it is. Obviously all schools need proper funding and nobody, least of all me, feels that the present level of funding is at all adequate, but to make a blanket rejection of everything and anything that requires investment is quite pointless. One could just as well argue that the National Health Service is starving the education system of resources.

The Government's intervention into local education is necessitated by the total inability of some, not all, local education authorities to undertake the duties required of them. Are we to

put the behaviour of the Brent authority? Are actions like these, and the countless nagging interferences with the professionalism of teachers, considered by the two contributors to be a good foundation on which to base the education of children?

While many educators appear to be in the hands of inexperienced, immature and ill-informed individuals, I have little faith in their ability to look after the best interests of children. It is this frustration that gives the impetus to the Government's action, and to the creation of a type of schooling at present lacking.

Mr Graham fears that the text issued by the Department of Education and Science makes no mention of parental involvement. What greater parental involvement can there be than the ability to select, freely, the type of education one's children receive? This is the true meaning of parental involvement, not sitting around in the evening deciding who is to run the tombola stall.

If either of these two experienced gentlemen had attended any of the public meetings revolving around the reorganization of secondary education in Liverpool they would have seen "parental involvement" at its best, and no matter how much they tend to trivialize it by referring to "working Tories", it is still the deepest aspiration of all parents to send their children to the best school.

The choice referred to starts with CTCs, but should go on to allow for schools specializing in other fields. Nobody, even Mr Baker, has suggested that we educate in one sphere to the exclusion of everything else, but the emphasis would be there, built into the character of the school. It is up to parents - not the Government, the unions, the I.E.S. or even the two learned gentlemen and myself - to choose what is best for their children, outside of the obvious and agreed constraints of a public examination system.

The choice ought to eventually be available between different schools offering a different emphasis in different fields, and attended by pupils whose parents agree with that emphasis, regardless of income or background. The attempt at creating an egalitarian society by homogenizing

the education system has blatantly failed, and the result, as we all know, is a house-hopping society for those who can afford such things and the bleak prospect of the local comprehensive for those who cannot. Extra cash admittedly improves the local comprehensive, but does nothing to alter the basic defects in the system.

I find that an increasing number of articles in *The TES* suffer, like these two, from endless semantic quibbles - the typical teaching dotting 'i's - crossing 't's - and avoid any depth of reasoning. Mr Plaskow's opening jibe about "essential preparation" for a child typifies such quibbles. The qualities that the CTCs wish to bring out are those "essential" for a person destined for employment in the "advanced industrial society". They are not essential for all who do not want to contribute to that aspect of life, but wish to participate in the remaining, vast, non-technological professions.

Indeed, most of Mr Plaskow's article reads like a critique of the DES's literary style. Like many other preparatory documents, this is a starting point, and if the unlikely occurs and the teaching unions actually help for a change, all the supposed defects could be ironed out in an afternoon. Does he really think that the DES will let such things as parent governors or pupil-ratios stand in the way of their founding?

I find it fascinating that the word "resources" has become synonymous with "cash". Local (and not so local presumably) industries are often quite willing to lend/give resources - that is, lend equipment or offer advice. Yet once again the argument devolves to the supposed deprivation to everyone else that this will supposedly cause.

Is this reasoning to be applied to everything? Is an art college only to be

run as the "average" school in case they feel deprived? Or should all schools have dancing bars because dance schools do? Such arguments based on equality of outcome rather than equality of opportunity are bound to end in such logical lunacies.

Mr Plaskow seems to find fault with the possibility of "creating a super-teacher, managing small groups, supported by technical and other ancillary staff and as much hardware and software as they can lay their hands on". Sounds pretty inviting to me! I was of the opinion that this is what we are all trying to achieve, parents and teachers alike (ignoring of course). Are we once again to accept only all or nothing situation in teaching? Surely it is better to get the ball rolling in somebody's court, rather than to pretend we haven't got either a ball or a court.

Indeed, the gist of both articles seems crystallized in Mr Graham's penultimate paragraph where he refers to the "select few". First, CTCs of around a thousand pupils hardly seems a few, and second, what he really objects to is any form of selection. Perhaps we really need to consider what parents want in reality, rather than what Mr Graham wants in theory. I too would object if CTCs were paid on a different scale to the rest of us. But if they received extra cash for extra duties (like outward bound activities), then isn't that exactly what we have been trying to achieve for years?

It seems to me that observed from the outside the teaching profession has opposed every change made for the benefit of children (as seen from the outside world, of course) and has been seen to obstinately pursue every change likely to feather their own nests. The world at large sees an entirely negative attitude, a profession that not only opposed the introduction of OCSB, but was openly hostile to it until it was forced upon them. A profession that, in the eyes of the public, refuses to be assessed as if it were afraid of being found out. And now, poised like desperate men, it waits licking its lips for the opportunity to strangle yet another innovation at birth. Have we really all come to this?

Perhaps I am making a semantic error by using the word "profession". Ian Poole is head of physics at Liverpool College, Liverpool.

## TALKBACK

One does not have to be a latter-day Scrooge to wonder why we teachers make life so difficult for ourselves in the run-up to Christmas. On the one hand, we permit and even encourage a spirit of festive jollity to overtake our schools, often at an unnecessarily early date. On the other, we expect normal work to continue and the customary discipline to be maintained as if nothing had happened.

We are trying to have our Christmas cake and eat it, and the ensuing frustration must surely be a major contributory factor in the nervous irritation felt by both teachers and taught as the autumn term lurches to its wild conclusion.

Christmas, in common with other festivals only more so, cannot, of course, be ignored in school. Even if we deplore the High Street's vulgar commercialization, which seems to begin almost as soon as the summer holidays are over, the children are bombarded with it from many directions and invariably succumb. Family preparations, too, inevitably cause mounting excitement, and many children attend churches or are associated with clubs and other organizations in which Christmas is clearly and excitedly seen to be coming.

So it would be both irresponsible and unrealistic of us to try to pretend either that Christmas did not exist or that it had nothing to do with school. This season *par excellence* with its message and its mythology provides invaluable stimuli for work which it would be foolish to ignore. The Christmas story will always be retold and will, quite rightly, form the basis for a great deal of very valuable creative and expressive work. We shall read about it, write about it, sing about it, act about it and paint about it.

Somehow, though, we have to convince the pupils that the work being

## CLASSROOM CHRISTMAS

## Yule be sorry!

Michael Smith

done is every bit as serious and just as important as work done at any other time of the year. We have to avoid gratuitously giving the impression that preparing for Christmas is tantamount to declaring the autumn term to be as good as over.

At the risk of being branded a spoil-sport, I would suggest that the villains of the piece are the parties and the paper-chains. These surely belong to that part of Christmas which should be celebrated during the holidays at home. As soon as we put up decorations in classrooms and holly in the hall, the unspoken message to the children is: "Serious work is now over. Relax. From now on it's downhill all the way."

Parties constitute an even clearer signal, as we permit normally well-disciplined pupils to cavort about on school premises in ways which are normally prohibited. If Christmas decorations herald the beginning of the end, the class party puts a firm full-stop to any significant work in the days which follow.

The local education authority, after all, provides a Christmas holiday in which all these things may be legitimately enjoyed. It is surely possible for us to distinguish between exploiting Christmas for genuine educational ends on the one hand and pre-empting the holiday with uninhibited celebration on the other. Unless we try to make and to maintain this distinction, we shall continue to find, as soon as we put up the paper-chains and announce the party, that our pupils will greet our

subsequent attempts to make them work with hurt cries of: "But, sir, it's Christmas!"

We deserve it. And instead of going gratefully home on the last day of term to anticipate letting our hair down and celebrating with our families and friends, we shall continue to suffer from the exhausted teacher's perennial illusion that Christmas is all over even before it has really begun.

Michael J Smith teaches, even in the week before Christmas, in a Hampshire secondary school.



## CAREER BRAKE

## Unto us a child is born

Val Woodcock

The "baby break" can impose an important barrier to career progression for women teachers. It has been estimated that an average 69 per cent of female teachers have children. Most do not opt for maternity leave, but take a break in their careers for child-care purposes. This means that although one-third of the teaching force takes a "baby break", little research has been carried out as to its impact on women's career progression.

One survey, found that the break had a "disproportionately depressing effect", even when adjustment was made for length of service. Anecdotal evidence would suggest that a common experience among women returners is to come back at scale 1, regardless of previous experience or scale post and, it may well be that the period of absence is during a woman's late 20s and early 30s when their male counterparts are making important steps forward in their careers. Women typically return with a quarter of a century's teaching in front of them and yet may no longer be seen as serious candidates for promotion.

Yet, not only women with children take breaks in service. Many teachers may leave to spend time in another area of employment before returning; others take time out for further training and to gain further qualifications. The difference is that these breaks are

not generally seen as detrimental to a career; indeed they are frequently viewed as positive, educational and confidence-building.

The "woman-at-home", however, is not seen to be accruing valuable knowledge during her period of absence. Many would say that childrearing is directly related to teaching and that knowledge gained in the process is directly transferable to the classroom, and yet it is often judged to be a "deskilling" rather than a "reskilling" process. This is a clear case of double standards which needs challenging.

The problems of discrimination and prejudice may also meet the woman who returns to school after a baby, which she may be viewed as having less commitment to her job and divided loyalties. Studies show that some men have deeply ambivalent attitudes towards women who combine motherhood and paid employment. Given the fact that most teachers in management positions are men, this fact may well militate against the woman who seeks promotion.

Teachers' unions should be exploring ways to overcome the barriers which the "baby break" imposes on women's careers. Other areas of employment, including banking the retail trade and medicine, have already introduced schemes which seek to minimize the effect of the break. The National Westminster Bank's "Re-

tainer Scheme" spans five years, on condition that participants do two weeks' relief work per year. The bank will then consider them for vacancies at their previous level or grade and provide retraining if necessary.

A similar scheme offers women dentists an annual retainer fee to return for a minimum of 12 paid service sessions and seven educational sessions per year. Other "re-entry" schemes consist of keeping registers of previous employees with the purpose of offering them re-employment and retraining when they return.

Although most of these schemes are set up with the companies in mind and are principally to be found in areas of employment suffering from a shortage of highly qualified young adults, they are mutually beneficial. Employers retain experienced workers and women return after childrearing at the same scale and level of salary they held previously.

The introduction of a similar scheme to teaching would considerably enhance many women teachers' career prospects. That is not to say that we should not continue to fight for other improvements in the working lives of teachers with children, such as increased nursery provision and extended maternity leave. However, given the large number of women teachers who do take a break in service, we need also to address the problem that many face on re-entry that is that the break may not be just a break, but an end to many women teachers' career progression.

Val Woodcock is equal opportunities officer for East Sussex division of the NUT.



# REVIEW

## Duels with God

Tom Deveson on William Empson

The Royal Beasts and other works. By William Empson. Edited by John Haffenden. Chatto and Windus £12.95. 0 7011 3084 9.

Empson is known for his knotty allusive poems and fiercely intelligent but quirky criticism. A superficial reading might suggest that the poems display a mere cerebral aridity and the criticism a flippant sense of intellectual superiority. This new collection of fugitive pieces, together with the long biographical introduction, should convince readers of Empson's deep seriousness. His style was indeed learned "from a despair". Like Nietzsche, he took religion thoughtfully enough to quarrel with it; his duel with the God of Christianity, which he excoriated as a creed of legalistic torture, emerges early in a little poem written at the age of 13. So, later, does his long fascination with Buddhism.

Throughout the book, with different degrees of success, he tries to bring together the warring halves of his interests and of the world - science and art, East and West, the mind and the reality it contemplates. But as he wrote in the notes to his favourite poem, "Racchus", "life involves maintaining oneself between contradictions that can't be solved by analysis". So we find him here working things out through writing, first in juvenilia including a melodrama and some despatch punning verses, and then with two long drafts.

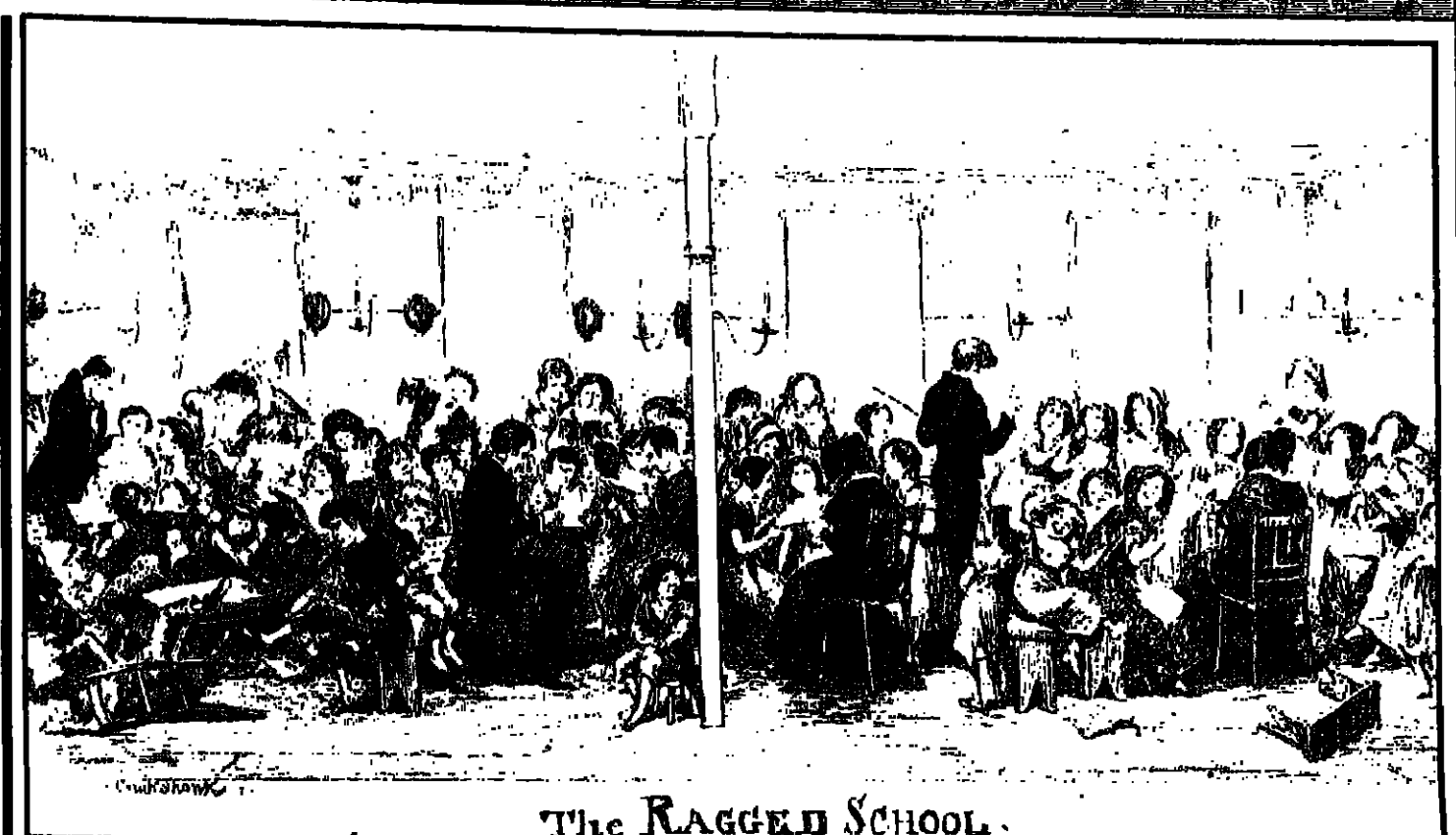
The first is a fable, "The Royal Beasts", about a group of fur-covered African creatures who are capable of speech and moral judgements. Apart from incidental satire on colonialism, this comic philosophical turns on a legal and theological conundrum: if the Wurrus aren't human, have they been redeemed, and if not, would Christ have appeared to other life-bearing planets? (Dunne was exercised by the same argument.) Religion also is at the centre of a plan for a ballet, *The Elephant and the Birds*, which combines a Buddhist story with the Greek myth of Prometheus. It's not clear how it would look on stage but it's evidence of Empson's teasingly fertile imagination.

John Haffenden has edited the book admirably. His biographical sketch vividly evokes a life of restless thought, literary energy and passionate curiosity. Empson responded to his loss of a Cambridge postgraduate fellowship for "sexual misconduct" (found by a college porter in possession of contraceptives - today Norman Fowler would give him a medal) with a set of cheerful Hudibrastic verse-insults. Later he pursued images of the Buddha throughout the Far East, wandering the ruins of Angkor and asserting that "the Europeans have got to realize that Asia really exists".

Most forgettably, he's remembered with the Peking National University in exile in the late Thirties, living on a sacred mountain in the bitter cold, surviving on burned rice and typing out *Othello* from memory to give his students something to read. Haffenden's forthcoming authorized biography should have the attention of its remarkable subject deserves.



Photograph by Christopher Barker from Portraits of Poets, Chatto and Windus £9.95.



## Pet prisoners

Neil Philip on Dickens as a social journalist

Major Charles Dickens in *Diary and Son* asked: "The county of Essex had lately been nearly thirty-five thousand pounds. How much better would it not be to have spent that sum in educating the poor rather than in building a prison for punishing them?"

Dickens used Ainslie's lecture as a springboard for the first of two articles, in 1846 and 1852, tracing the development of the Field Lane Ragged School in Farringham from his first visit in 1843. The major improvements in the school over this period were largely brought about, though he does not say so, by his own intercession with the philanthropist Angela Burdett-Coutts. She is an important figure in Dickens's charitable enterprises: she supplied the money, for instance, to run the home for fallen women, Urania Cottage, which Dickens oversaw, and which he describes in another of the essays, "Home for Homeless Women". Also on the board of management of this institution were Kay-Shuttleworth and the prison governors Chesterton and Tracey, whose reforms of prison discipline were

again a focus of Dickens's attention, in essays written at the time of his visit to the prison.

Dickens was one of the earliest and most influential supporters of the movement, though he was far from starry-eyed about its methods or its chances of success. He wrote, "Admitting the full merit of the Ragged Schools... we still must not disguise the plain fact that they are, at best, a slight and ineffective palliative of an enormous evil." The teachers were untrained, the premises were inadequate, and the purpose of the instruction often seemed to be to "perplex the minds of these unfortunate creatures with religious mysteries". Dickens's only fictional portrait of a Ragged School, in *Our Mutual Friend*, is cutting: the school is, quite simply, "a lamentable jumble".

Charley Hexam moves on from that jumble to one of the new National Schools, staffed by certificated teachers, products of the reforms of Kay-Shuttleworth. This is essential to the story, but it is also an example of how the social concerns of Dickens's trenchant journalism repeatedly surface in his fiction; just as, conversely, the rhetorical devices of the novels turn the factual essays into vivid drama.

One of my aims in editing a selection of that journalism for a modern audience was, by juxtaposing the little-known articles with extracts from the novels, to demonstrate this interdependence of fact and fiction in his work. As novelist and journalist, Dickens demonstrates a keen awareness of the key social issues of his day: health, education, poverty, crime and punishment. In both cases, he knits those issues together to form a complete picture and critique of the society in which he lived.

Always, it was the plight of children that moved him most. In the title essay of *A December Vision* he laments, "Thirty thousand children, hunted, flogged, imprisoned, but not taught." His support for the Ragged Schools rests on this vision. Whatever his reservations about the ramshackle, amateur nature of the Ragged School Movement, Dickens could wholeheartedly agree with its spokesman, the Revd Robert Ainslie, when he

argued that "the education of the poor is the only way to the improvement of the race". In the weekly journals *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*, Dickens developed his vision of a society in which an edifice of wealth and power was built on a foundation of suffering and injustice. For some, this vision is vilified by his refusal to accept its implication: that society needed to be radically restructured. The education was not in Dickens's "age", he ranged himself as wholeheartedly with the forces of law and order as he did against the forces of oppression, and despite his quick human sympathies he identified, in the battle of wits between society and its outcasts, with authority.

Because his imagination embraced the whole fabric of society, Dickens's social reports are more than good journalism, and more than raw material for his novels. They offer a passionate and vital insight into the great human problems of modern urban life. While they are firmly rooted in the particularities of his day, it is extraordinary how applicable his comments remain to present-day affairs. In 1854, for instance, Dickens reported on a strike at the Preston cotton mills in terms he might just as easily have used of the recent miners' strike.

For Dickens, education was the key to social progress. His novels, from *Nicholas Nickleby* onwards, give us a good idea of the sort of schooling he disliked; it is in his letters and speeches, and above all in his journalism, that we must look for his positive suggestions. These centred always on practical measures and plain, unbiased instruction: on offering an alternative, at least, to crime, poverty, degradation and disease. There is no doubt that, whatever their drawbacks, the Ragged Schools made a valiant beginning in this work, and Dickens honoured them for it. The Revd Ainslie's statement of purpose is given, in Dickens's newspaper, a distinctly Dickensian ring:

"They proposed to educate all, without reference to sectarianism, bigotry, or any party whatever, but to lay the Bible before them, instruct them in the good principles it contained, and bring them up in a manner that would teach them to respect themselves, respect those placed in situations above them - but giving them at the same time the primary means of attaining the highest stations in life, should their talents and their assiduity bring them within their reach - to honour their fellow creatures and their Creator, and by so doing to benefit the whole community."

Charles Dickens *A December Vision: His Social Journalism*, edited by Neil Philip and Victor Neuburg, William Collins £10.95. 0 00 217638 6.



# Ruling the waves

John Crossland sets sail from Shakespeare's Cliff

Well they did it... the Channel tunnellers who would undermine and reverse the course of nature and history to make Britain part of the main have raised the first £200 million towards realizing their dreams. It was a cliff-hanger that might truly have set poor, blinded Gloucester's head spinning, as his imagination wrestled with the lineaments of the majestic landscape being painted for him, of sea-echoing white cliffs, washed by the restless sea.

With good reason this piece of our coastline is dubbed Shakespeare's Cliff; the last view of England afforded to the exile and the first to stir his patriotism on return. For 400 years the Bard's lines have expressed every true Englishman's feelings about his island home.

This precious stone set in a silver sea which serves it in the office of a wall, or as a moat defensive to a house, against the envy of less happy lands. Not any longer if the Channel consortium has its way, and the prospect of a Channel tunnel has obviously prompted a publishers' race to be first at the initial shaft - sinking, and in every sense Nigel Calder's *The English Channel* (Chatto & Windus £12.95, 0 7011 30539) wins the riband.

Calder is a former Vice-President of the Cruising Association and like Jonathan Raban, prefers to form his impressions afloat. Not for him the role of a *Candido*, however. This book could be packed with advantage in the planning of a Channel trip by some of those 20,000 who each year in Britain take courses in the navigation and handling of yachts and dinghies.

For a part-time sailor, Calder's narrative must be a real pleasure, as he sets the auto-pilot and cross-checks on historical derring-do, or an anecdote which brings a cove, headland or fishing village into suddenly high profile. Underlying it all is a marvellous empathy with the physical nature of the Channel; its tides, winds and weather.

An account of the 50 million-year-old chalk dam which once linked England and France, and became the White Cliffs of Dover, is transformed into a discussion on ways and means to account of the 20th-century's equivalent of a land bridge; a discussion calveined with humour and telling use of statistics.

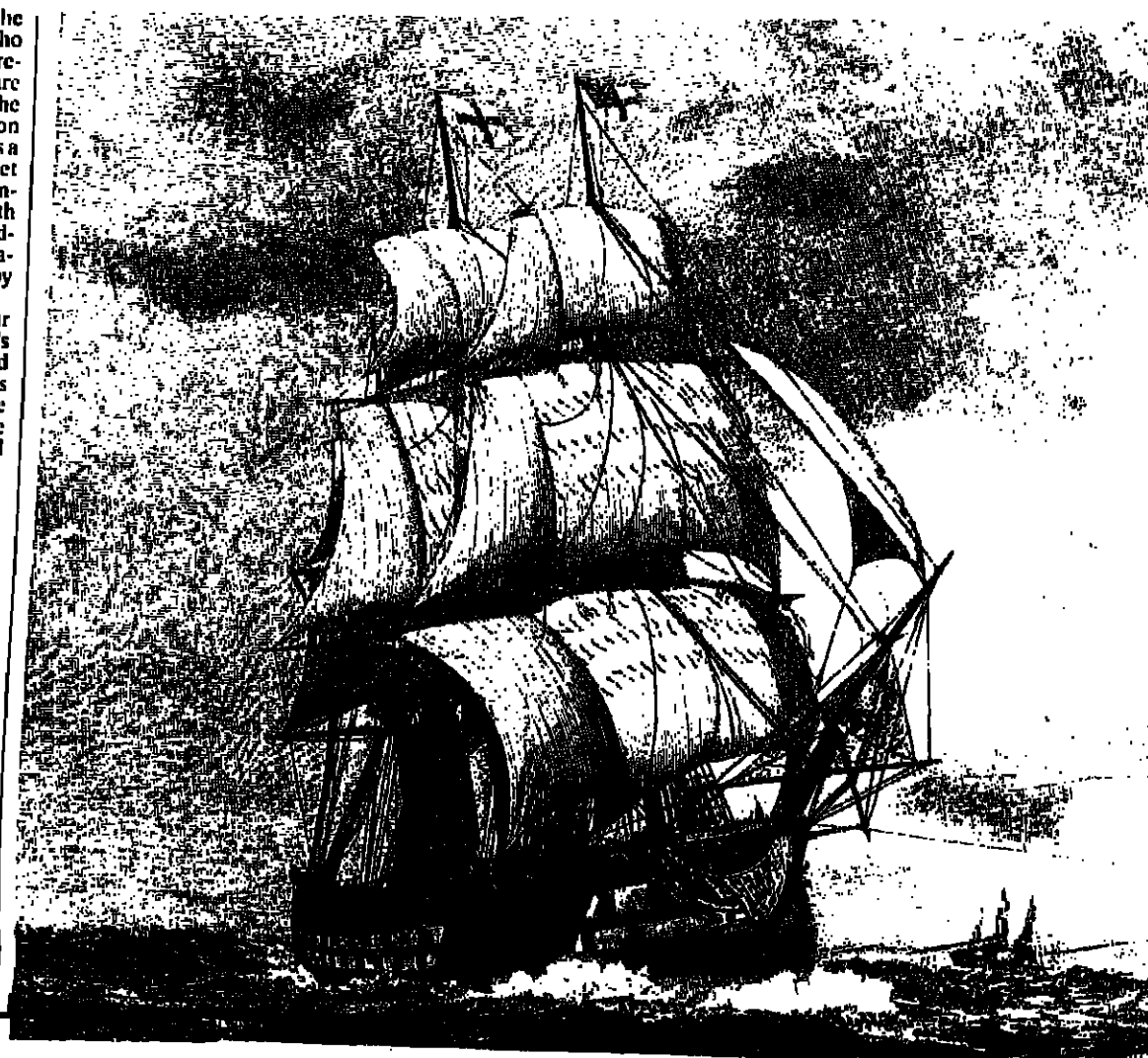
The "did you know" game can be played here - that Halley, of Comet fame, surveyed the Channel, his small boat narrowly escaping a privateer; that the landing beaches of D-Day were scouted for suitability by a notable philosopher who knew the coast from taking his girl friends there?

Think the radar-carrying landing craft for part of the landings was knocked out so that the following wave hit the wrong beach head and met less opposition? Or that the berrug fishery died out in the Channel, either because less water was flowing in from the Atlantic, killing the fishes' food, or because of life-and-death competition between pilchards and herrings?

Calder's mass of information is marshalled in the form of a logical itinerary, up-Channel on the French shore and down-Channel on the English (with some very good battle descriptions).

Shirley Harrison's *The Channel* (Collins £9.95, 0 00 447385 X) is arranged chronologically and suffers from the need to switch back and forth geographically. Occasionally the naval history is treated in *Boy's Own Paper* terms and without a true understanding of the context. Also, the book is marred by bad proof-reading, as in Hope, instead of Home Popham, and Crispin's Fall falling on October 15. On the other hand the author does cast her net wide for stories not covered elsewhere and which include Captain Boyton's Victorian cross-Channel swim, using a rubber suit and paddles.

It goes to show how far an Englishman will go to answer the call of the sea. Long before the swim, evolved as an innocent act of asserting "territorial" claim, the south coast of England was geared up to defending the offshore waters in earnest - Wealden forests provided the stuff of that thing



Ship of the line, Napoleonic era

of beauty, a man o'war. It is hard to cut today that the immediate post-war Admiralty permitted the blowing-up of one of the last examples. Today conservation is quite the thing and Nicholas Rodger has made a real contribution to our understanding of the Georgian navy, with his *Wooden World* (Collins £17.50, 0 00 2165481).

Dr Rodger is an assistant keeper at the Public Record Office at Kew and has used the Admiralty letters, ships' logs and court martial records, preserved there, in often elegant copperplate, to amend, persuasively, the traditional "rum, sodomy and the lash" (not to speak of weevily biscuits) view of life afloat in that fleet.

It can be said, of course, that statistics easily lie. But Rodger has brought a Namerite rigour to his arguments, testing a naval tradition across a wide range of sources. Rum certainly helped the matochis fight (drink), in large quantities, was an indulgence allowed by most officers, although Keppel, for one, was caught out, writing to Lord Anson, "I am in a sad pickle with the whole ship's company drunk". Another captain reported "the men in great confusion, having the day before received fourteen pounds prize money, and could not get the anchors up to save the ship".

Sodomy was practically the only crime in the Navy for which the death penalty was often awarded and Rodger has only been able to turn up eleven cases which came to court martial during the Seven Years War, of which four accused were acquitted and seven convicted on a lesser charge of "uncleanliness".

The healthy young men who made up the majority of the service (and they were frequently young, even sub-teens) could expect to spend about half their commission in port. The pretty "diversions" there could find themselves "outward bound" and it was not unknown for women to help serve the guns, but captains were spared the ritual of "showing a leg". One took his "Miss Nancy" with him on the ship's muster roll; Captain Cumming, on the other hand, was dismissed the service for other irregularities, before their Lordships could discipline him over her two mistresses. The lash, that nine-tongued instru-

ment of torture, which is eternally associated with a snarling Charles Laughton, on the *Bounty*, was, in fact, used far more sparingly than generally realized. The men could take their officers to law, and sometimes did so, and in one case, in 1763, the crew of the *Coveney* (that old ship's name pursued "severe officer" down the Channel and severely beat him. Lashes up to 500 for a thief, were not as usual as a cuff across the ear from a boatswain's mate for insubordination. This is a splendid history, taking its place with Ehrmann's *The Navy in the War of William III*.

As the Royal Navy, even in a benevolent climate of Tory rule, fights for the means to maintain its traditional primary role in defence, and the Merchant Marine continues in its seemingly terminal decline, there has never been, paradoxically, such a yearning for the revival of our unequalled maritime past. Declining ports are queuing up for the privilege of berthing ancient ships, of which, like Spitfires, there seems to be an "inexhaustible" supply. And, more important, the money to maintain them can always be found.

Two of the current spate of maritime books are particularly helpful in understanding the historic problem of the need to develop strategies that are imaginative and flexible to ensure the "nation's bulwark" holds. A new edition of the late Stephen Roskill's 1962 classic, *The Strategy of Sea Power*, (Goodchild £12.00, 0 86391 060 2) only serves to hammer home, at an important juncture in defence matters, the continuing validity of the old maxim "that it is the means by which one can use the sea for one's own purposes and prevent an enemy from using it for his". To read Captain Roskill, an historian who was never afraid to challenge orthodoxies, is to marvel at his prophetic power. So much of what he predicted has come to pass in such a short time. The phasing out of the mobile task force to replace static bases, and the increasing dependence on the submarine as a forward picket line on Western defence and launch pad for missiles, are all Roskill predictions that have come true.

The Falklands campaign would have given the captain grounds for a certain satisfaction, even though the carnival atmosphere of its launch earned it the reputation in some quarters of an exercise in "19th century Imperialism". For hadn't he called in this book for "two up-to-date, highly-mobile task forces, capable of landing and supporting a Brigade Group, at very short notice, wherever a sudden demand for the presence of conventional power may arise? He also drew attention to the vulnerability of convoys to direct attack by missile-carrying aircraft... and to the need to nurture the Merchant Marine, which provided those convoys.

In fact Captain Roskill would have been less happy about the difficulties in mustering a credible response under the Red Duster (or Blue Ensign) in time of war, as shown up by the Falklands, Shakespeare talked of *yon tall anchoring bark, diminished to her cock* (ship's boat).

He could have been referring to the shrinkage of our merchant fleet, cut by more than half since the war to only 672 ships, of 9.6 million tons, and down from 1,573 ships of 29.8 million tons 10 years ago. Nor, with losses like Conway and Ganges, are there any longer the schools of navigation which could provide the men for any future Falklands emergency. Again Roskill was ahead of the times, for the Government has just announced the formation of a pool of seamen to draw on in time of war. As we go to press, however, comes news that the *Powdermill*, an 1819 frigate, which has provided courses in sea training for children for many years, closed "as a school this month. Despite an appeal the trust which runs the ship has found its maintenance too costly. The staff of the fine old vessel, moored in the shadow of the Victory, must be in the question of defence may well dominate the next general election, with the "big 5" - "Advanced and economical" missile-firing submarines - or rather the argument - at the very centre of the controversy. There could be no more timely

compliment to Roskill than *The Wealden Atlas of Maritime History* (£16.95, 0 297 786539). Anthony Preston was formerly in charge of Admiralty Records at the National Maritime Museum, now edits *Jane's Defence Weekly*, and is therefore a voice to heed in the long debate started by Mahan, on whither, and why, seapower? His self-contained essays, ranging from the Phoenicians and Salamis to the rise of the Soviet Navy and a survey of maritime trade in the Eighties, are accompanied by maps and diagrams, drawn by Richard Niekel, head of the cartographic department of the *Economist*, which give either the oceanic stretch of a sea campaign or a grasp of the true strength of the Russian fleet, at a glance.

While our maritime heritage trusts are busy collecting historic ships, the present American Administration is taking nostalgia to the ultimate degree and recommissioning Second World War battleships, a majestic example of which recently filled Portsmouth harbour.

Ernie Bradford, in his *The Great Ship* (Hamish Hamilton £12.95, 0 241 19529) looks at the whole fascinating, and sometimes bizarre history of the breed, from the first floating gun platform of Henry VIII to President Reagan's circa 1944 B-picture survivor. The awesome nature of big-ship action is recoverable now only on grainy film of flame-belching Leviathans, sundering the seas, groping for their unseen targets with their long, sinister barrels; or the recollections of old salts. Bradford has told a great story in a little compass very well.

Another welcome reprint is Richard Hough's *The Great War at Sea 1914-1918* (Oxford University Press £5.95, 0 19285 181 0) which also starts with the story of a great ship, the *Dreadnought*, and goes on to show how *any* of it, and four for the power it represented, was a major factor in the First World War. The nature of the power, however, he seems to have been offensive and therefore misused in the botched opportunities of Jutland. Surely, though, the concept of a "fleet in being" was that it formed the ultimate deterrent of its day. What is really important here, and what the Germans grasped, even before Jutland, was that Britain was most effectively threatened by submarine - thus making Roskill's case perfectly

"Hostilities-only" seamen are, perhaps, less likely to accept "bull" than their professional "opos", and this could have played its part in the upsurge of mutiny in the Napoleonic Wars. But anywhere, at any time, penned into the hot, overcrowded confines of a ship, particularly in the Tropics, have posed a problem of indiscipline and Bill Glenan found himself, as an ordinary seaman, in a British equivalent of the *Caine* mutiny.

There was no Captain Queeg, but the ship was dirty and "unlucky", the crew demoralized; the "enemy" was the top brass and the US Navy. No wonder the Navy has tried to keep the secret for 40 years.

I'm not sure that Dennis Barker in *Ruiling The Waves*, (Viking £12.95, 0 670 80370 7) is quite correct in saying that for almost half a century the Royal Navy and most of the British public have been mutually invisible. Television has been a fly on the bulkheads of many of Her Majesty's ships and the Falklands coverage, often by patrolling boats, and not all favourable to the Senior Service, have refocused public interest on the Navy.

The impending parting of the Channel waters may not be proving as traumatic as at first thought. When the day comes we may no longer be an island, but with the growing absorption with messing about in boats - and preserving them - Barker's message, that we should care about the guardian of 95 per cent of our vital supplies, may not be entirely unheeded.

As the preamble to the Articles of War puts it: "It is upon the Navy that, with the good providence of God, the wealth, prosperity and peace of these islands and of the empire, mainly depends."

## Uneasy bond

Betty Tadman on human-animal relationships

*A Company of Animals*. By James Serpell. Blackwell £14.95, 0 631 14536 2.

1937 a sow and her six piglets were shot at Savigny-sur-Étang in France considering and eating an infant. The sow was hanged, the piglets shot because of their youth and that their mother had set them

an example. In medieval Europe, men accused of eating livestock were publicly condemned, and burned side by side with the sows, cattle, and donkeys who played their part by being shot in 1679 a woman and a dog exchanged together on Tyburn Hill, road of bestiality.

The story of human-animal relationships is a bloody and shameful one. James Serpell argues that in our day with animals we are governed by emotional and material considerations. In tracing the history of this uneasy bond, the behaviour of primitive hunter-gatherers, the modern factory farming, he sees the "wild and wonderful" of a man who has approached the

company of animals is hardly questionable the attitude to pet keeping and the management and condemnation of strays with another special regard to the substitute for *their* lands. But while we may break down, lovers lose sight of the end of its life. The dog and fidelity are wonderful companions, and when one thinks of them, and can be confident that they are not imposed upon, I cannot help but feel that the dog is a friend. At least I know that I have a friend who would never leave me on all fours." Thus Horace

found Freud showed no interest in the dog. The affection which he had for them made him regret the absence of pets in his past, as he was appreciative of his dog's unwavering loyalty. Ouida, the 19th-century novelist, said "those who are so eminent in any way find the

world full of parasites, toadies, liars, fawners, hypocrites: the incorruptible candour, loyalty and honour of the dog are to such like water in a barren place to a thirsty traveller".

In 1977 Erica Friedmann, a graduate of the University of Maryland, began a study of heart attack sufferers recovering in hospital. After many tests she found that the presence of pets helped their owners to relax. More tests followed which proved that greeting and caressing a pet resulted in a significant fall in the patient's blood pressure. The company of a loved animal is reassuring, the majority of owners usually state that companionship or friendship is their main reason for owning the animal. Affectionate relationships span the differences in species by a form of non-verbal communication.

People who campaign for animal rights - though some extremists are counter-productive - are frequently regarded as foolishly sentimental and idealistic. Those who love their pets and care for them as if they were a loved child are often considered absurd or even perverted. Mahatma Gandhi argued that the greatness of a nation could be judged by the way it treated its animals.

In tribal societies women nurture piglets, puppies, deer and young bears, giving them milk from their own breasts. These pets are fondly loved and in most cases are neither sold nor eaten, though there are exceptions. In New Guinea, piglets are in the exclusive care of women - suckled, cuddled,

played with, and later hand-fed, groomed, and decorated. The animals exhibit much affection towards their foster mothers, and in return the women feel deeply attached to them. Prior to a feast the men, who live apart in separate houses and have never known the victims, remove the animals and slaughter them.

Thus the buck is passed. In today's society chickens and animals are frequently reared in hygienic but abominably cruel factory-farm conditions, separated from their kind, never seeing sun, sky or grass. They are then driven or shipped to the place of slaughter and arrive in the supermarket as minced beef, pork fillet, or lamb cutlets, miles away in space and time from the source.

queue up in the abattoir. The shopper need not think about the animal's sufferings: what they see does not even look like an animal, so neatly arranged, dated, priced, are the various parts of its body.

Why do we make pets of cats and dogs but not, for instance, of pigs? They are just as clean, intelligent and sociable. Biologists describe the human preference for large-eyed cuddly creatures as the "cute response" and suggest that Walt Disney designers create maximum appeal by exaggerating the babyish features of the animal.

The modern pig's life is short and wretched. In the most intensive systems piglets are quickly isolated in stacked individual cages and are liquid-fed hourly. Later they are kept in groups in cramped conditions, to pre-

vent aggression they live in overheated near-darkness. The result is a state of lethargic stupefaction which is ended by transportation to the slaughterhouse in horrifying conditions of overcrowding, without food or water for hours or even days. Injuries and deaths by suffocation occur, the survivors scream in blind panic as they approach their deaths. Prime back, streaky, collar, smoked bacon, but never cat or dog steaks. The saying used as an excuse "nature is red in tooth and claw, we all prey on each other, it is the natural cycle of existence" is hardly applicable. How many carnivores find their way onto a butcher's slab? It is innocent herbivores which are the chosen.

over the exploitation of animals, and the natural world has grown. Societies, charities, ecology parties and conservation organizations now exercise a social and political influence. James Serpell widens these facts into an admirably presented argument. He sees the paradox as exemplified by a brutal utilitarian attitude to factory farming co-existing with loving pet ownership relationships. He believes that derogatory views on pet-keeping are often erroneous and should be replaced by a consideration of these friendships as a natural human characteristics.

By becoming aware of our biological similarity to them we may achieve a more humane attitude to other species with whom we share this planet.

## New look to the old, old story

*CHILDREN'S LITERATURE*

*Song of the Three Holy Children*. By Pauline Baynes. Children's Books £4.95 0 416 191 171 7

*Paradise*. By Helme Heine. Children's Books £5.95 0 416 191 171 7

*Christmas*. By Jindra Capek. Children's Books £5.95 0 416 191 171 7

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enough care is given to texts. But *The Song of the Three Holy Children* is a rare example of a little-known Prayer Book text which has been enhanced by its distinguished artist. Everyone knows the story of how Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were cast into the burning fiery furnace at the order of Nebuchadnezzar for refusing to worship a golden image. Instead of being burned they were saved, and sang the hymn called the *Benedicite* which is nowadays rarely used in churches because of its length. Here it springs to life thanks to Pauline Baynes's vivid illuminations. This project is obviously a labour of love, and the exquisite, often quaint but unsentimental detail of all the creatures joining in praise of their creator makes the reader smile. We wish she had added the traditional ending, and perhaps even a musical setting. Pauline Baynes should turn her hand to the Prayer Book Psalter or some other Biblical texts.

Another approach to creation is Helme Heine's *Saturday in Paradise*. After a brief prologue dealing with the first five days of the week, God, shown as an elderly but vigorous sculptor with a well-equipped studio, sets about fashioning people. Heine introduces an interesting unorthodox variant by making Adam and Eve children. But they can ride panthers and mammoths. The illustrations, by Patricia Crampton's fluent translation,

of the short text complements Heine's witty watercolours. There is more thought behind this elegant book than may first appear and the result offers a new look to a familiar story.

In comparison, Jindra Capek's *A Child is Born* suffers from the common failing of an inadequate text. It derives from a Czech legend about a peasant boy, Josh, and his cat who follow three strangers and find the Christ child in a snow-bound Czech village. The idea is charming but the actual retelling is limp and heavy. We cannot judge whether this is the responsibility of the German-language original or of Noel Simon's English rendering but the weak text undermines the magic of Capek's Holbeinesque pictures.

Peppa Blakeley's *Christmas Car* is just as a cat who follows the three wise men to find the baby Jesus. But it adds nothing to the traditional Christmas story. Yutaka Sugita's paintings are in an interesting medium using a textured background but, like the text, feature a cat who is all pussy and no bite. The traditional story can stand embellishment, but the additions must justify themselves.

Catharine Gardam has clearly been moved by another non-Biblical Christmas story, suggested by Hardy's poem *The Oxen*, in which the cattle are imagined kneeling at Christmas. Her book attempts to expand this into a

story in which the animals are found actually taking part in a service in a ruined church. But the idea, though obviously sincere, is flawed. It is not going to church that animals praise God, but by fulfilling their natures. The image of the original poem is dissipated by being made over-expressive.

It is a harder task to write readable lives of the saints than to produce pretty picture books. Whether the stories are historical or legendary matters less than whether they are inspiring. In the past, lives of the saints for children have too often presented a negative picture of sanctity. John Ryan, best known as the creator of Captain Pugwash, here tries his hand at two legends. *One dark and stormy night* tells the story of Saint Christopher, the huge man who wants to serve the strongest king so enlists under Satan but defects to Christ when he discovers Satan is afraid of his rival. The story is vividly told with real humour. *A Bad Year for Dragons* is a similar account of Saint George, less successful because Ryan fudges the ending. He has made the dragon so cuddly that he cannot bear to kill it off.

But we would like to see him tackle some more saints now that he has got into his stride. Stephen Barber and Mary Hoffman

## lingo

Idiotisms

Apart from a really good mixed metaphor, there are few things more entertaining than a grossly misunderstood idiom. I like to think of these things as idiotisms, though this may be doing violence to a word that already has two meanings.

David Mabel MP said recently: "That will tidy us over until... No, the idea that had escaped him was that of the tide coming in and carrying the vessel over obstacles, such as rocks or the wrecks of vessels which had not been so lucky. Inevitably, of course, the tide would go out again. The whole point about being tidied over (not tidied over) is that the benefit is merely temporary."

Then an Irish politician said: "We will not stand any truck with violence. What can it mean, to stand a truck? There are two trucks in English. One is derived from an old world meaning a wooden wheel or roller, as used in the Navy to run out the guns. From that it came to mean a vehicle for carrying goods. The other, quite unconnected, meant trading by exchange, barter. From this came the idea of payment of wages other than in cash, hence the Truck Acts which abolished the practice. The meaning widened to cover any kind of traffic, intercourse or dealings, so that it would be proper to say: 'We will have no truck with those who indulge in or support violence.'"

It is just possible that the Irish politician meant that his group would not put up with any other group negotiating with the IRA, but the context suggested otherwise.

No context can exonerate the priest who said that "the ordinarine women would be to emusculate them". Nor Cliff Richard, who is on record as saying: "I don't want a million-

W S Brownlie

## Carolling

The Novello Book of Carols compiled and edited by William Llewellyn. Novello Complete £10.95, 0 85360 127 5; part 1: £8.95 0 85360 125 9; part 2: £8.95 0 85360 126 7 £5.95 each.

Under the direction of Charterhouse's Director of Music, William Llewellyn, Novello has come up with an interesting collection of carols. We are offered many old favourites in new arrangements, and with new descants. Alongside these are 16 totally new carols from such interesting young composers as Ronald Corp, Stephen Jackson, Judith Weir and Robb Wells.

The choice covers a wide variety of Christmas subject matter, and the conventional Nine Lessons can be easily mirrored in music from this book. In addition a goodly number of non-liturgical carols and Christmas songs appear, suitable for concert and classroom. A number of pieces are from other countries and other cultural roots, including texts in the original language as well as singable and appropriate translations.

Musically, the arrangements are very approachable; mostly in four parts. Twenty-four of the carols are provided with orchestral accompaniment, available on hire. (Novello has produced a separate *Novello Junior book of Carols* containing twenty-one arrangements for unison or two-part voices and school instrumental ensemble. Commendably, they are compatible with the parent book.)

Like greatly Mr Jeeves's new descants, in particular the two provided for "O come all ye faithful", the clever canonic imitation of the original tune in "Hark the herald angels" and the splendid version of "The first Nowell" which includes the optional interpolation between verses of Geoffrey Alinger's carol "Mary's Child". There is also a jolly version of "The Twelve days of Christmas", a sensitive arrangement of "The Angel Gabriel", two equally attractive versions of "I saw three ships" and quite the nicest version of "Stille Nacht" that I've seen.

Ian Butler



## BOOKS

## Oxbridge blues

My Oxford. Introduced by Ann Thwaite. Robson Books £4.95. 86051 381 5.  
My Cambridge. Introduced by Ronald Hayman. Robson Books £4.95. 86051 382 3.  
St Hugh's: One Hundred Years of Women's Education in Oxford. Edited by Penny Griffin. Macmillan £17.50. 333 38486 5.

Is there really a difference between Oxford and Cambridge? Glittering prizes and Olivia Channon, May Bails and Commemorative Fen winds and creeping Thames fogs, honey still for tea and dreaming spires: it seems to form one kaleidoscope of images, not two. In real - which are, when one comes down to it, academic - terms, the universities historically have shown differing strengths, but by craftily recruiting teachers and students managed to retain their twin pre-eminence in the post-war mortuary which had threatened their centuries-old dominance of society.

To outsiders Oxbridge remains an impenetrable monolith. To the initiates, differences are palpable. They are the only group who could really be interested in the two collections of reminiscences released by Robson Books. Only an Old Girl of St Hugh's herself could care about the college history and it is hard to believe that any of them could care to the extent of £17.50 and only 16 illustrations (black and white).

I will confess immediately as a graduate of Oxford to preferring Oxford, and hence to preferring Ann Thwaite's optimistic collection of essays. I always suspected, from four visits and a dislike of the cold, that Cambridge was a cheerless place full of scientific swots and Ronald Hayman's

firm this prejudice. Most of them seemed to spend a lot of time at Cambridge wondering what they were doing at the place at all; Oxford chaps and chaps alike. But Thwaite is the prime example assumed they were there to have a good time. Olivia Channon's fate might sound a tragic anthem to this attitude, though some



THE BEDMAKER

Cambridge servants: Illustrations from Christopher Platt's *The Most Obliging Man in Europe* (Allen and Unwin £10.95), an affectionate study of the life and times of the Oxford scout

final exams were always sat from the psychiatric hospital. Wild artificiality has its strains, and a world in which everyone can be queen for a day is not the best environment to develop mature responsibility.

If Ann Thwaite's collection (Martin Amis, Nina Baym, John Bejman, Lord Boothby, Alan Coren, Antonia Fraser, John Gorton, Raymond Massey, John Mortimer, Nigel Nicolson, J. I. M. Stewart and Angus Wilson) flaunts their memories with the whimsical wit associated with Oxford since Lewis Carroll, Ronald Hayman's dozen take their task more seriously.

Lord Caradon, Donald Davie, Simon Gray, Thom Gunn, Raymond Leppard, Nevill Mott, Piers Paul Read, Arianna Stassinopoulou, John Valzey and Raymond Williams - the list contains many more intellectuals and one genuine Nobel Prize winner, Nevill Mott, whose essay is the only one in both collections which could be

of interest to anyone wanting to know about the education afforded at the universities.

Truth, I always believed (from the conversations of my Cambridge friends) was a goal they rigorously to be sought; a sound and sceptical argument, my Oxford dons insisted, was the test of an educated mind. This difference in emphasis might account for the greater disillusionment to be found among the ex-Cambridge people, whether, like Raymond Williams, they sought the Grill and were disgusted at the close him and insularly which barred it, or whether, like Simon Gray, they spent years in a fog of self-disgust, coming then via (on self-admission) through the course.

Hayman's phrase, "meaningful statements" abound, from Miss Brad-wood's characteristically severe analysis of social trends in the university to Thom Gunn's portentous discovery of privilege, Arianna Stassinopoulou's musing on "what I believed" (which

appears not to have changed since) to John Valzey's emotional turmoil; and even Donald Davie's endearing invocation of the English Faculty Library ("so many books") is mixed with the need to say something profound.

The literary Oxford bunch content themselves with the anecdotal. Martin Amis ponders his love life. Angus Wilson remembers a schizophrenic existence cruising rough trade in London and social climbing in Oxford sherry parties. "Is it fun?" asks Lord Boothby. Antonia Fraser remembers her clothes and John Mortimer how he cribbed his way through the entrance examination. Raymond Massey was sent down (more or less) but continued to row in the Eight (College boat). I don't know why anyone who didn't go there would want to read about it, but most of us had a good time, and some of us learned how to think.

Victoria Neumark

## Screen débuts

New German Cinema. By James Franklin. Columbus Books £5.95. 086287 209 X.  
Steven Spielberg. By Donald R. Mott and Cheryl McAllister Saunders. Columbus Books £5.95. 086287 237 5.

These are two volumes in an interesting new series of film books which includes studies of leading directors and of current trends in cinema. Franklin's comprehensive survey of German cinema since the Oberhausen manifesto of 1962 centers on the work of Fassbinder, Schlöndorff, Herzog, Wenders and others who have achieved international recognition, but he begins with an introductory chapter that establishes the artistic and political context of their work and his extensive bibliography mentions some less-known names. Both the analyses of films and the reference material will make this a valuable handbook for English readers.

Mott and Saunders have undertaken a rather different task with Steven Spielberg. It is not easy to deal with the work of a popular commercial director without sounding pretentious; there are times when the close examination of themes and structures in films like *Jaws* or *Indiana Jones* is slightly solemn. It is a pity, too, that they were not able to give full consideration to *The Color Purple*, which was released just as they were completing their study. But overall this is both a useful study of the ingredients of Spielberg's success and the context of the US film industry in which he works.

Paddy Kitchen

Robin Buss

## Lopped lobes

Jane Dorrell on the Christmas book that wasn't

The Age of Scandal. By T. H. White. Oxford University Press £4.95. 0 19 281948.

T. H. White called this his "Holly Walpole" book. It should be the perfect Christmas present, a delightful bedside book. It isn't quite that.

The "Age of Scandal," a "little scrap" of a nostalgic Tory covers a wide canvas, from Pope to Crevier and back again in a welter of anecdote and gossip which is linked by letters and comments from Walpole and Johnson. The cast is well-known: Selwyn, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Henry and Monboddo play leading roles. We read of the rumours concerning Walpole's parentage, the goings-on of the famous Miss Chudleigh, the sufferings of Chatterton. Some of the stories are familiar, some less so, but none are new.

White got his material from the Dictionary of National Biography and from books he was able to buy in Dublin in 1944 when he was doing research on the 18th century for *Mistress Masham's Repose*. Eyewitnesses shoot up at some of his more sweeping statements such as "Pope was a malevolent cripple not known for telling the truth" or "the fourth Earl of Orford terrified the leaders of the Street and drove young poets to suicide" but even so it would all be immensely entertaining if it were not for the gradual realization that White dwells rather too lovingly on scenes of flogging, torture and execution.

It was a brutal age. The mob did make an execution the occasion for a public holiday, operations were carried out without anaesthetic, boys were beaten at school. The last was not a custom confined to the 18th century. White was frequently beaten when he was at Cheltenham College, summing up the rules there succinctly: "petting-flogging". All the same, there are too many descriptions of the horrors and too many unpleasant quotations. Even though White says "some of the stories in Walpole are still almost too horrible to print" he goes ahead and includes them. By the time the gruesome hanging, drawing and quartering in the chapter on Caroline Matilda has been hastily skipped over by the sensitive reader, it comes as no surprise to learn that these are cars which have been chopped off. It starts cheerily enough with the notion that the ear is an under-used sexual organ which gave rise to a peculiarly 18th century form of vice, but in no time we are knee-deep in lopped lobes; those of hanged, dogs, pigs and men. The most celebrated, of course, that belonging to the unfortunate Captain Jenkins. The last chapter, needless to say, is about the Marquis de Sade.

White recognized that his book might leave an unpleasant taste in the mouth. When it came out in 1950 he sent a copy to his old friend David Garnett saying: "Here is this thing, which I post with more than a little misgiving. For some reason which I don't fathom - it is something which whirling things round in a centrifuge, all the cruel and sadistic bits have settled in volume 1, while the kind bits about country life, General Pitt-Rivers, the sonby, etc., have all been put off to volume 2. Anyway, don't be cross about all the birching and head-dogging - which they did do - until you have seen the sequel."

It was not until 1962, a year before White's death, that Garnett learned more about his friend's proclivities. He wrote: "T. H. White was a sadist and a masochist. He was frequently occupied with sadistic fantasies." That explains a great deal. Unfortunately, the second volume, which would have redressed the balance and which was published as *The Scandalous* in 1962, is long out of print as is *Scandalous* by a 50 mile radius of Stratford-upon-Avon. The project, said Graham Watts, "We expected a lot of the usual 'teenage angst' but what we got was a range of

## Tragedy swept away

King Lear. By William Shakespeare. National (Olivier) Theatre.  
Spring Awakening. By Frank Wedekind. Young Vic Studio.

When I Was A Girl - I used to scream and shout. By Sharman MacDonald. Whitehall Theatre.  
Brighton Beach Memoirs. By Neil Simon. Wyndham Theatre.  
The Women. By Clare Booth Luce. The Old Vic.

It is as if Hare and Hopkins fear deep emotional engagement. Lear's madness provokes laughter, as do Edmund's dying words, and Lear's four elemental howls are delivered in conversational tones. When he finally breaks down and weeps for what he has passed through the effect is magical in its power to move - tapping in to the play's poetry. But it is too late and Philip Locke is left to sound genuinely tragicomic from "Break heart" to the end. Doubtless the production will develop. Nothing will alter Stromberg's costumes - Tibetan padded coats, leg-o'-mutton sleeved gowns and radical chic women's uniforms - nor Hayden Griffin's distractingly ingenious moving panels.

Moving is not a word for the Inner Circle Company's production of *Spring Awakening*. Under Margaret Gordon's direction, a predominantly young cast acts out actors' conceptions of childish behaviour - twisting fingers, rolling eyes, open mouths and gawp-mouth - or exaggerates the eccentricities of age beyond belief. Helen Tulley's clever setting delights as does Gary Brunton's lighting. But the play's strange poetry and its deeply felt moral anger at the hypocrisy which denies the sexuality of children is never touched.

Edgar, a sudden moment of bright stillness in the storm. All these are very fine. So is Anthony Hopkins' Lear for commanding vigour degenerating into senility, for uncouth riot breaking out and pathos, for the grand sweep of tragedy which catches us in the throat - these are not yet in evidence.

Only the two boys kissing under the vines revealed something of its power to move.

Children's sexual experience and its power to mark adulthood is a theme of *When I Was A Girl*. Morag (Sheila Reid) takes her daughter Fiona (Julia Walters) to a Scottish seaside resort full of painful memories for them both. Meeting her childhood friend Vari (Geraldine James), now a fecund mother, Fiona relives the sexual games they played together, "dirty" to Morag, thwarted by Fiona deliberately seducing Ewan (John Gordon Sinclair) to become pregnant. A great deal of laughter is drawn from the sexual naivety of the girls and Morag's rigid moral stance. But the abiding impression is of deep pain, of spoiled lives in a family without love. The acting throughout is first-class.

So it is in the transfer of *Brighton Beach Memoirs* with Susan Engel (Kate) and Dorothy Tutin (Blanche) adding lustre to the splendid original cast in a heart-warming evocation of New York 1936 greeted *The Women* protesting at its "hard, scruffy, raw" picture of predatory, backbiting and a temporary society women. London 1986 greeted it with laughter, delighting at the skills of a star-studded female cast (too numerous to name) battling bitchy one-liners at one another. That it fizzles out at the end and leaves a nagging sense of anti-feminism hardly matters what is, after all, lightweight entertainment.

John James

## Of mice and ducks

Basil - The Great Mouse Detective (U). Odeon, Marble Arch and various cinemas.  
Howard - A New Breed of Hero (PG). Cannon, Oxford Street and various cinemas.

"The Queen is in danger, the Empire is doomed!" from his lodgings beneath Baker Street, the Great Mouse Detective, assisted by the faithful Dr Watson, pits his wits against Professor Ratigan, who has a cat, a one-legged bat and the voice of Vincent Price as his weapons to disrupt the royal jubilee and take control of the Empire. The latest feature-length Disney cartoon delights in the dingy atmosphere of Victorian London, from mouse eye-view, using the potential of the genre to exaggerate colour and perspective, especially in the dockland scenes and the exciting climax on Big Ben. Younger children will surely enjoy it and their parents will note that Basil is a less austere figure than his famous original.

Ratigan's scheme depends on a misuse of technology and is defeated by a rather inefficient detective, a bumbling, warm-hearted doctor and a small child, with a Scots accent. Howard belongs to the same breed of hero. A duck, accidentally transported from his own planet to Cleveland, Ohio, he finds himself teamed up with a singer (Lea Thompson) against the Dark Overlords of the Universe. Early on, we get embroiled in a love story ("duckie"), but thankfully the Dark Overlords intervene before hero and heroine have solved the problem of consummating their relationship and from then on it is non-stop mayhem.

As an hors-d'oeuvre, the Dark Overlord systematically dismantles a fast-food restaurant, then demonstrates the inadequacy of safety procedures at a nuclear power station to recharge his batteries for a final assault on the frontiers of modern science. The evil monster and the evil machines are rubbish and Howard, who has wisely quacked his way through it all, emerges from the wreckage to start a new life in show business. Today's heroes are a mouse and duck, not a Rambo.

Howard, in fact, has it both ways; you can enjoy the violence (police cars, nuclear installations, coffee machines and "particle disintegrators" come apart in short-lived and expensive special effects), while knowing that it is all done for laughs. Humans (and duck) are spared to deliver some really funny lines.

Apart from these, and the usual crop of fantasy films, is a thin Christmas for the family at the cinema. In London, the Barbican is showing *Labyrinth* (Cinema 1, until January 1) - but then, so is everywhere else. The Junior NFI at the National Film Theatre offers some good Saturday and Sunday afternoon programmes, but has managed to schedule *Annie* for December 27, two days after its showing on BBC1. In fact, television wins all round, with old favourites like *Dumbo* (ITV, December 25). The Wizard of Oz and *The Railway Children* (BBC1, December 24 and 28), and new classics of children's cinema like *Christmas Present* and *The Young and the Restless* (Channel 4, December 14 and 22). But these films were first seen in the Capital Radio Junior Loan Film Festival and, though some films from that event reach the small screen, it is a pity that more do not end up in theatres where we can take the kids out at Christmas.

Robin Buss

## Pasta party

Pinochio Theatre Royal, Stratford East.

*Guarlate indietra!* The panto season's back, and at Stratford it's panto *alle parmigiane* as we delve into a delightful updating of the story about the little wooden boy.

But *mamma mia* isn't all this portrayal of Italians as spaghetti eating, ice cream selling hand waving Mafia-dominated sex pots a little like national stereotyping? Apparently not. Stratford East's impeccable record of anti-racism remains unblemished. I am told by one who knows that it's fine to poke stereotype types fun at the Italians because they aren't disadvantaged.

So, on with the show. As ever at Stratford pantos, the real stars are the sets, and this year Jenny Tiramoni's picture postcard evocation of Tagliatelli on Sea, though distinctly un-Christmasy, is a real treat. And the visual fun keeps on coming in scene after scene, with a wonderful sea scape

(including giant shark) and a flashy mafiosi palazzo for the villain Don Kometto to skulk in.

The other triumph is Pinochio himself. Michele Seraphim is the first black Pinochio I've ever seen and he shines throughout, hody popping, hip hopping, break dancing and mischief making through the show and keeping up exactly the right balance between self-centred little show off and lovable little boy. Philip Middlemiss is great fun, too, as Arri Verderchi (sic) the standard issue Italian waiter, all tight jeans, padded tee shirts and tortured English.

Two disappointments, though. One, that the music, though ingenious, sounds a bit thin. The on stage three piece band look interesting, but there's no real dramatic excuse for them to be there. The other is that smut (dame jokes about salami sausages and the like) is creeping back in.

\*Look behind you!

Nick Baker

## Styling the language

Writers Project. Smith/RSC Fortnight, The Other, Stratford on Avon.

With the opening of the Swan Theatre this year the RSC's studio, The Swan, is forging a new identity for the company's Stratford base for the performance of new plays and enacting of new writers, including a workshop project to help young writers.

The culmination of a series of workshops since June, with writers Lisa Smith, David Holman and Les Smith, the performance by RSC actors of new plays by RSC actors, people ranging in age from 16 to 30, of the plays originated by the workshop project to help young writers, was selected from 100 scripts submitted by young people from a 50 mile radius of Stratford-upon-Avon to take part in the project. Said Graham Watts, "We expected a lot of the usual 'teenage angst' but what we got was a range of

quality of the scripts we received", although a programme note cautions, "some of the work was too personal, too purgative and many of the writers would benefit from working with professional writers in order to more fully realise their potential".

Of the plays selected, most heartening to watch were those where the writer was clearly grappling with, and beginning to succeed in, styling the language and shaping the form of their writing to dramatic ends.

Fifteen-year-old Glenda Cooper had styled her play, *Mind's Eye*, as a modern morality play, the characters of Social Pressure, Worry, Despair and Temptation vying with the exhortations of parents, schoolmaster, and friends to create a vivid image of the pressures of adolescence. Jyoti Patel (16) had used a similar stylised form, and the patterning effect of bilingual dialogue, to project the cultural conflict experienced by so many young Asian people.

Simon Kent (17) had shaped his experiences of working in the shoe

framework of a 30-minute monologue, creating a variety of character and incident to make a performance not just a stream of thought.

A gloss of satirical comedy on the dialectic of the place of art in society also turned Sarah Woods' (18) play, *Revolution*, into something dramatic and theatrical; an enactment in modern commando-style of Plato's debate with Thrasymachus, and it was a knowledge of the classics again which produced Andrew D. Waldron's (17) 70-minute play, *Dido and Aeneas*. Though the story was the re-telling of the legend, the writer's handling of the language - in the disciplines of scansion and of metaphorical imagery - made this the most technically polished item on the programme and his writing an exciting prospect for the future.

Ann FitzGerald

Some of these plays can be seen in "Not the RSC" in Newcastle and in platform performances at The Pit, Barbican, in London.

# CLASS STRUGGLE

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ARTS

If some of the more ambitious plans for London's South Bank Centre go ahead, the much criticised concrete desert between the two concert halls - the Royal Festival Hall and the Queen Elizabeth Hall - will be covered over to make one vast indoor leisure centre. The new South Bank, under its director Nicholas Snowman, formerly artistic director of Pierre Boulez' controversial electronic music centre IRCAM in Paris, is all about integration. And that doesn't just mean the architecture. Snowman's thematic programmes planned to begin in 1988 will involve the Hayward Gallery and the National Theatre in an attempt to stem the steady decline in concert audiences over the last 10 years.

The new regime has declared education a priority under the broad aim of "involving a wider public in the South Bank Centre and deepening understanding and enjoyment". The team of three is headed by Sue Robertson, formerly education officer with the Arts Council. "The fact that this post is at director level and that we have been given a significant budget reflects the importance given to education. I don't want just a token gesture."

But in these days when education policy is virtually obligatory - most of the major orchestras, to say nothing of individuals, are trying to get at schools in one way or another - isn't the South Bank merely jumping on a fashionable bandwagon?

The difference appears to lie in the in-depth approach which the new department will adopt. Sue Robertson refers to the London Sinfonietta project with the unemployed in Hackney. "It certainly brought people to the Festival Hall who had never been before. But we don't know how many came back. One-off events aren't really satisfactory. We have to stimulate motivation at the home base."

A major long-term project takes as its theme "Reconstructions". In keeping with Snowman's whole-site policy there are plans to involve not just the concert halls, theatres and gallery but the river, railway and Waterloo Station itself. Not surprisingly, it will span photography, even "life skills".

The idea is to persuade teachers that the South Bank is a working environment,



Sue Robertson, and the South Bank concert halls

# Leisure for pleasure

Education on the South Bank: a critical look by Philippa Davidson

not just a place where people sit listening to classical music.

In this project, as in others, there will be a strong emphasis on teacher education. "The aim is to build up a core of teachers who will help us develop our plans in the best possible way." One of the first areas to be tackled is the education of orchestral players and animators, performers who work with children. "After all, it is vital that orchestral players who are going to work in schools are properly trained to do so."

Next year a project involving students from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, players from the

marquee. At the moment the South Bank doesn't have a venue suitable for the kinds of activities planned and has to make do with the Music Box which is a hothouse in summer and noisy at all times.

Non-classical music will be a vital ingredient of this event - African drumming and gamelan music have been mentioned. But is there any evidence that the concert-goer who represents the average audience at the Royal Festival Hall really wants to hear jazz, steelband or for that matter an all-contemporary programme?

Sooner or later, of course, the conversation comes around to audience-building because, however it is disguised, the purpose of any education policy is to increase the number of future concert-goers.

"We obviously have to evaluate what we do very carefully" comes the reply. Recent statistics give some grounds for optimism. The 1986 Summer Music Festival organized by the London Sinfonietta drew a higher-capacity audience than is normal for contemporary music (55 per cent) and the GLC's Foyer Music policy has brought more bodies from different social classes into the concert halls.

"We don't want to stereotype who comes to concerts" says Sue Robertson, in defence of the mixed programme. But the fact remains that the concert-going public inclines towards a middle-of-the-road classical programme, and it is interesting to note out of the four non-orchestral programmes run in 1984 "Hooked on Classics" drew the biggest number of new concert

goers. How to bring in new audiences without putting off the regulars is just one of the problems faced by the management. The new policies are still only having a minimal effect: the 2.3 million tickets sold represent a mere 750,000 concert-goers.

I asked whether in these times there was any particular reason why a school should spend money on inviting orchestral players to work with pupils rather than on an item of new equipment for the science lab or a set of textbooks. The budget of £200,000 has to be matched by i.e.s. and other sources and realistically not every borough will see the need to cooperate in the South Bank's schemes. The LEA has always supported "off-site" learning. "But oddly enough it's those people who come regularly to concerts who won't see the need to provide the children in their borough with similar opportunities."

There is an additional problem in setting up new projects at a time when teachers are distracted by - and resources are tied up in - the GCSE examination. "We are not going out to put on a performance of set works, but since the new exam covers a much wider range of music than before we will almost certainly be able to help with non-western or contemporary music that cannot easily be found on record. And, of course, we have a lot of young composers working with children just now. Teachers are going to find that a great help in preparing pupils for the composing section of the exam."

Ideas abound: from music theatre at the Queen Elizabeth Hall to cassettes for commuters (rather like recorded programme notes), from master classes with the orchestras-in-residence to initiatives in adult education. More detailed proposals will be announced in the New Year.

All the right things are being said and the principles are educationally sound. But those children who will benefit from the new policies are a tiny minority. If the South Bank's "out-reach" policies are going to work they have to provide a service beyond what schools can get from teachers, books and tapes, or what the LEA can provide from its own resources. Or some will say the £200,000 could be better spent.

take only one of the operas, the Pergolesi, and set it in downtown New York in the Thirties.

Pergolesi's opera depends for its humour on the audience identifying with the conflict between the characters, in the original a brutish master and a servant girl who tricks him into marriage. Settling the opera in a ladies' underwear shop and recasting the characters as a secretary and her boss might be thought equally inappropriate for a modern audience. However, the transposition worked - only just - because of the ability of the two principals to communicate. Anne Marie Hetherington sparked as the flirtatious secretary and David Ashman was convincing as Umberto, the slippery as the silk under his heels.

In the Mozart, Helen Mason and Robin Green drew out the freshness and delicacy of the composer's youthfulness. The opera is not ideal even for chamber opera, both productions show just what can be achieved on a shoestring budget with ingenuity and enterprise. The double bill is repeated on December 19/20 at Ranges House, Blackheath.

Philippa Davidson

## Mixed passions

Carmen. By Georges Bizet. Whitgift School, Croydon. Bastien and Bastienne. By W A Mozart/La Serva Padrona. By G B Pergolesi. Opera Plus at Leighton House.

Passion, tragedy, romantic storyline and powerful characters - no one would question that *Carmen* is an opera with a special appeal for young people. But to perform it with an entirely school cast takes courage. Yet surprisingly few allowances had to be made for the combined forces of Whitgift and Croydon Hurst in this unexpectedly professional production of Bizet's timeless masterpiece.

Excellent chorus work from soldiers and townspeople were an obvious manifestation of a strong choral tradition in both schools, and the children's chorus in Act I gave scope for involv-

ing the younger pupils. It is in the solo roles that the absence of trained voices can sometimes jar. Rupert Warren made an intense Jose, portraying the love-torn dragon with an endearing innocence that made up for the strain that showed in his voice from time to time. Micaela, often a thankless role, was sweetly sung by Catherine Crowley who coped well with the demands made of her in Act II. Jane Murphy as Carmen outshined the rest of the cast in the outstanding range and warm tone of her voice, particularly in the lower register. For a singer of school age to carry off this sophisticated role with all its operatic showpieces is surely a unique achievement. Given sufficiently strong soloists and a dramatic tradition there is no reason why more schools should not follow this highly successful *Carmen*.

Opera Plus is a small group of young artists who combine careers in professional companies with the exploration of new directions in opera. The billing of Mozart's pastoral miniature *Bastien and Bastienne* with Pergolesi's more earthy baroque *La Serva Padrona* is apt, though at first glance there appears to be rather less logic behind director Stewart Gray's decision to

## One world

African Madonna. Holy Trinity Church, Clapham Common, December 13

I remembered the words of Third World's song "Peace on Earth" during last Saturday's performance of *African Madonna* in Holy Trinity Church, Clapham Common: "With a little bit of love, what we can do." For an identical message was being conveyed to a large audience in the church, this time by hundreds of children, whose unison cry of "Amen" would have given us to much. They have been edified not only by Third World but also by every other reggae band. Indeed, the climax of *African Madonna* was a dance choreographed and led in performance by a young woman who vividly demonstrated the rhythmic creativity

and joy in celebration which infuse African culture.

The young Kenyan soprano, Rhoda Acheng Graven, was the Madonna, linking the black African experience with the American in her exquisite singing of "Hush Little Baby" and at the same time summarizing the theme of the work: "Every child born comes from Heaven above. In every child's face is the face divine. And every child born is yours and mine." Equally young, the Norwegian soprano Sissel Kyrkjeb completed the physical representation of the polarity of black and white, south and north. Her voice is a remarkable combination of clarity, control and acrobacy; evidence, perhaps, that the days of the mindless European vibrato are numbered. Father Murray's piano accompaniment was precise and restrained, and the performance of *African Madonna* was directed by Felicity Laurence, who had devised and arranged the work, making use of words from William Blake's

*Songs of Innocence*.

There were faults, of course. The unaccompanied singing was marred by clumsy note-sounding, and there were rhythmic inaccuracies in the children's singing (notably in "Silent Night"). Some of the young participants had too little to do, and Adeose Wale's control of dancers and drumming was not matched by his control of the accompanying percussion group. Nevertheless, the performance of *African Madonna* was quite exceptional in its sense of conviction and, as Wale put it, creative synthesis. And it must surely have helped focus the attention of those present on the need to develop the concept of one world, a concept which Dire Straits express so well in their "Brothers In Arms". There are many different worlds, so many different lives. And we have just one world. But we live in different ones.

Michael Burn

## Menotti's double

In a recent review of Jenufa in the pages of this paper, I wrote of changes that now appeared to be blowing through the Royal Opera House. This was rash, for the cowbells are back again with the Menotti double-bill which the ROH is presenting at Sadler's Wells Theatre until December 27, and which will be broadcast on Radio 3 at 5pm on Christmas Eve. That stalwart favourite Arnold and the Night Visitors, written in 1951 as a television opera for NBC, New York, is here preceded by the British premiere of *The Boy Who Grew Too Fast*.

Both works are produced by the composer, conducted by David Syrus, and designed by John Pascoe with a picturesque sentimentality precisely in tune with the operas themselves. There are several fine performances, notably from James Ralabird as Amahl, Lorna Haywood as his Mother, with Graham Godfrey and Stewart Hunt as the respectively tall and short versions of *The Boy*. The many schoolchildren involved played themselves to great effect and popular acclaim.

Dating from 1982, *The Boy* is described as an "opera in one act for children and for people who like children". The composer-librettist, now 75, is quoted in the programme as saying that "in an overgrown child myself", and that he is fairly exacting measure of the matter, not least in that the nine-year-old hero of *The Boy*, Poponel, is a strapping six-footer. *The Boy*, with its schoolroom of children doing wicked things behind the back of their dashing ruler-swishing teacher (played and sung in hock-down style by Judith Howarth), joined one into new found admiration for the more wholesome air breathed by a work like *The Sound of Music*. Menotti's monster schoolboy is reduced to normal size in an all-right flashing machine that would have been

junked on first audition for the Paul Daniels Show. Its inventor is a handily-legged Brimstone-like figure, who is discovered sitting in the stalls, and who protests loudly at being called out while he was enjoying the show. The pantomime stunt is now upstaged by old mother morality. The price for Poponel's "normality" is that he must on no account dissent from majority opinion. Recalling from collective cowardice when a bandit storms in, Poponel regains his proper size, knocks the villain out and is proclaimed hero of the hour. The inconvenience of being a bit of monster evidently has its use. Poponel is now fêted by the same classmates who had previously rejected him, the point being driven home by everyone singing lines to the effect that winging is wicked, and that everyone is jolly lucky to be themselves and nobody else.

From the opening "hymn" onwards, the featherweight music fails to dispel the uncomfortable atmosphere of gauche moralizing and straining after effect which pervades the piece, and seems unlikely to fool its intended audience. The occasional ensemble aside, Menotti relies on a conversational style of recitative, interspersed with some little solos that are not good tunes and are over before they've begun. There is scarcely any sense of musical development, characterization, or even continuity. One gets the impression of an awkward little playlet, supported by (or let down by) music that is, quite literally, incidental. Whether for children, adults, or whoever, operas need to be dramas that are alive because of vivid musical invention. Menotti prides himself on being a skilful communicator, and his striving for clarity and directness of expression has, in words like *The Consul* and *Maria Golovin*, not been ineffective. But the formula has aged less well than its inventor. Wilfrid Mellers once well described Menotti's music as "neither good nor bad, but so cinematically parasitic as to be without identity". In *The Boy* this talent for mediocrity attains new heights of audacity and cannot expect to escape, a smart thwack or two from teacher's ruler.

Patrick Carnegie

# Cracks of the stage whip

Annie. Heatham House Youth Theatre, Twickenham. The Right Thing. Tricycle Youth Theatre. Between the Lines. John Ruskin High School, Croydon.

"No one cares for you a snidge / When you're in an orphanage" - well, they wouldn't, would they, when you go around singing lines like that. Nevertheless, Heatham House Youth Theatre's *Annie* is an awesomely efficient piece of cutesy-wutesiness, depending much on the authentically rehearsed Rachel Collins's playing of the heroine. One or two other excellent performances, notably Jane Wright's Miss Hannigan, the orphanage boss who in this production bears a striking resemblance to a wicked version of Father Rantzen, and William Hodgson's Daddy Warbucks, which seems deeply modelled on James Stewart.

For why, in some of the big production numbers, do most of the cast look dead behind the eyes? Not a problem that Tricycle Youth Theatre have in *The Right Thing*. It starts by threatening to be a doctrinal seven ages of person criticism of forced gender roles, and (thankfully) ends up

as a much more gentle account of the fate of a group of schoolkids, how they come to terms with the opposite sex and how (or if) they decide on permanent partnership in the light of their parents' failing marriages. It's a bit soapy (there's even a near-altar jilling) and rather sprawling (these affairs are often too democratic - it's as if everyone has to have a fair crack of the stage whip) but it's played with complete conviction and it reaches no particular conclusion quite amiably - even optimistically.

Little optimism to be enjoyed in *Between the Lines*, John Ruskin School's gripping First World War play. Set for the most part in a field hospital in France in 1917, it covers almost every social aspect of the war at home and abroad - the lives of women munition workers and of nurses, the agonies of soldiers wounded in battle, and the varying expectations of a generation who underwent the greatest social change this century.

All this is centred on a number of simple stories that start with a doomed led by a foolhardy CO: a man is shot and paralysed by a bullet from his own side. At home, his munitions worker wife slowly realizes how orga-

nized labour might change the lives of women. A young man agonizes over the bedside of his fatally wounded twin brother, an emotionally numbed MO attempts psychological experiments on the wounded, while nicely brought up young nurses gingerly get to grips with gangrene and gore. There's also a subtly developed line of black humour, with a devil may care amputee performing an impromptu tap dance and an unforgettable scene in which the walking wounded scuriously sabotage an official war photograph.

Teacher Alan Cubitt wrote the play for (and I suspect, to a small extent with) his A level students, who perform with consistent maturity and discipline. It's an extremely well rehearsed piece, too, particularly where medical matters are concerned. However, it does sprawl somewhat, with much of the social background drawn in too much detail and a little too much intensity in the style of direction. In all though, it's a magnificent achievement, made all the more affecting when you realize that the large cast are playing people of more or less their own age.

Nick Baker

## Cast of thousands

he school play is alive and well and leading our attention. Pimlico's production of *Guys and Dolls*, with dance, song, drama, even gymnastics, is an exciting, bouncy production. A young-looking cast of about 100 worked hard and, I suspect, learned a great deal. They brought some very clever staging to the play, and the production was lavishly decorated. Some settings were minimal and, despite the wacky costumes, it has to be said that parts of the performance lost the visual impact that a show like this demands.

There was a vast talent on show here, but particularly liked the way the Huggs (Nathaniel) handled the punchy Bronx humour, and Andy Smith (Miss Adelaide) and Ruth Harding (Sarah) performed with real verve, especially when singing. The second half fairly swung along, driven by a jaunty band, and lifted by an enthusiastic audience. I suspect the value of this production lies less in its contribution to youth theatre than in its demonstration of a corporate identity: a vibrant celebration of the school as a community.

The same richness of spirit was evident at Charlton Manor Junior School who presented an adaptation of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. The Little Matchgirl, given to the rest of the school, the mood all round me was decidedly supportive. Despite financial limitations, there was real ingenuity of presentation as pieces of scenery rotated to provide settings for the scenes: the pictures the matchgirl held one which brings tears to the eyes, but the emotion was intensified by some lovely original songs, delivered with warmth and enthusiasm by the cast. It was heartening to hear youngsters tackling harmony lines with such confidence. What was clear was that the school was not just a place of learning but a place of joy and importance.

Just down the road at Nine Acres School, Plumstead, there was a school of a different kind. A loosely-based documentary style presentation of *UNICEF's Dance for Africa* appeal. Every student in this school for children with severe learning difficulties took part, from the ages of 2 to 19. Some came under their own steam, some in wheelchairs, some helped by a member of staff, some simply supported by each other. Seldom have technical skills or performance errors been of concern to a reviewer. The presentation of this community are used to help them as givers. They grabbed at the opportunity with an energy that



Jude Ankl as Glitch Manlio in a production of *Hiawatha* staged by 40 students and staff at Crownwoods School and Youth Centre, Eltham, South London

rocked the hall. Of course, it was a glorious credit to all concerned; but it was also more than that: it brought to the notion of "those less fortunate than ourselves" a biting relevance. Another ambitious project, for very different reasons, was Sean O'Casey's *The Juno and the Paycock*, presented by the Oratory School, Woodcote. O'Casey's technique is to wrap vital issues in a light veneer of Dublin humour: we laugh, and immediately feel uncomfortable about having done so. The whole cast carried this mood well, in a last production which maintained a grim foreboding beneath the Dublin banter. Helen Sloper was excellent as Juno, combining the practical woman as provider, comforter, arbitrator - without detracting from our sense of her tragedy. This made demands on a young actress, but her performance was finely judged.

There was good support from Nicholas Davies as Joxer, Dolly who

captured the light music of Dublin talk, and Stephen Gallagher's splendid effort in his difficult job of portraying Mary Boyle. Matthew McAdden worked hard and achieved much as "Captain" Boyle, the principle model of men who "strut" - the "paycock" of the title. This aspect needed to be more pointed because of its importance to the theme of the play, in which men spout principles and proceed to either kill one another or devote their entire energies to drinking, while the women bear the burdens of everyday life.

The final section, from the announcement of Mary's pregnancy to the end of the play, was particularly good. We were left in firm agreement with Juno's remark that it did not matter that Mary's baby would have no father - better still that he should have two mothers.

David Sheppard

# Strike home

A Pocket Full of Promises. Leicestershire Schools' Theatre Company.

A play is either written or devised. "Devising" means coming up with the sort of thing that a writer might produce, but without employing one. *A Pocket Full of Promises*, the latest offering from the Leicestershire Schools' Theatre Company, is a devised play. Its stylistic roots are in the pioneering work of Joan Littlewood, the greatest deviser of them all. The company went back to the kind of source that Littlewood loved - oral history - and they found the kind of theme that Littlewood might have treated, in the impact of the General Strike of 1926 on an ordinary Leicestershire family. The structure of the piece reflects the old Theatre Workshop taste for sudden switches of theatrical presentational mode. One moment we are on a naturalistic domestic set, the next we are transported to a football ground where the course of the strike is described in terms of two teams, the workers and the government. (The match ends with the workers' team manager, the TUC, inexplicably calling his side off the pitch when they are 2-1 up.)

At its best, devised work can have a boldness and directness that more crafted writing might lack, since actors are more willing than (most) writers to abandon the primacy of the text in favour of the concrete image. And

there are parts of *A Pocket Full of Promises* that have these qualities. The songs devised by company member John Cheetham and sung by Carol Lythgoe are pure gold: theatrically riveting and remarkably effective in the way that they encapsulate and condense the emotional impact of the strike on its human subjects. They hit the children in the audience good and hard.

The risk that devised work always runs is that, in the absence of a writer, the actors may make a dog's dinner of any naturalistic dialogue they have to produce. Some devisers, like Mike Leigh, get over that by spending months in preparation and by examining every element of dialogue to make sure that it rings right and true. Others, like Peter Cheeseman at Stoke, ensure authenticity by relying on their primary oral sources, and by making sure that they have more than enough material on hand. Unfortunately, Leicestershire Schools' Theatre Group do not have the resources of time or money to match such work in depth. Their play was created in five weeks, and there are only five of them in the team. As a result, the naturalistic side of their work is less than convincing. Leicestershire is one of the few authorities in the country to pay a theatre company so well that it can take live theatre into schools free of charge. Would that more night follow suit.

Barry Russell

# Terminal panic

Can't Pay? Won't Pay! By Dario Fo. Crucible 'TIE. Brinsworth Comprehensive, Rotherham. Accidental Death of an Anarchist. By Eugene Ionesco. Eastern Stage, Gainsborough.

A decade or so ago in Italy, Dario Fo wrote dangerous, challenging plays reflecting the political mess his country was in. The scripts were changed as events changed and performances were staged for thousands in football stadiums. He was arrested, his wife was beaten up. Now his work goes on in London's West End and is being studied for A level.

Both plays currently on tour have the structure of the traditional farce. Fo bases his farces upon real events, and although he quickly plunges into manic fantasy, he uses the structure to comment upon what he sees as the lunatic nature of the real world.

The biggest drawback for Crucible TIE's production of *Can't Pay?* is the set. It is too small, and too poor to accommodate the cast. *Can't Pay?* is not the most accessible of Fo's plays. It was purpose built for another time and place, and concerns the actions taken by Milan housewives to combat the inflationary prices in the supermarkets. Two women steal food which they have to keep hidden from the

police, and their husbands. Complications multiply alarmingly. This production has the necessary pace and clarity, but it can't really be said to be a success.

The GES production of *Accidental Death* has the set, but not the pace. The play is based upon an incident in Milan in 1969 when Giovanni Pinelli flew out of the fourth floor window of the police headquarters while being interrogated for a crime of which he was innocent. Ten years later the Italian courts convicted his murderers.

It is a study in terminal panic. Logic is twisted, solutions offered only to be whisked away. We feel no sympathy with the corrupt police, so it is a delight to watch the squirm. The play should be touched with a dangerous insanity. Patrick Kealey's Manise, who, disguised as the investigating judge, exposes the real sequence of events, is too much the slightly scatty professor for there to be any real sense of alarm. For A level students the productions are invaluable, and it must be said that both will play better in front of larger audiences.

Nick Wood

Both productions are touring into the New Year. Contact Kate Green at Crucible TIE on 0742 62061; Great Eastern Stage on Lincoln 34924.

## Knockout

Something Big at Bridlington School.

Bridlington School's final production of *Something Big* - written by Chris Bulman, English teacher, directed by Danuta Tomasz, drama teacher, music by Robin Tait, music teacher - played to a full and enthusiastic house of pupils, parents and local dignitaries. Chris Bulman's response to the DES push for industry in Schools was to set the story in the world of Thatcher's Monetarism versus Mills and Boon Romance in the Big Smoke. Subsidary plots involved gang warfare, the pop music industry, unemployment, homelessness as well as some unfortunate references to Japanese tourists and Arabs.

The cast of 90 children responded magnificently to the challenge of playing roles of which their knowledge was purely stereotypical and to a somewhat over-written script. They really came to life when they were given the opportunity to project their own culture and interests. For example, the

scenes with Ossie Mucous or the sparkling rendition of an anti-school song by the lower school. In a school where a strong community identity is so clearly in evidence it would have been interesting if the pupils had been given opportunities to examine themes closer to home and of contemporary local interest - perhaps Ossie at the end of his YTS computing scheme rather than Laura pilchering for the directorship of a London Commercial Bank.

The final scene was knockout. It combined the improbability of a Shakespeare comedy and melodrama from Verdi with the final death rattle taken from the plot of the Beggar's Opera.

Angela Anning

## ENDPAGE

Michael Clarke reviews a selection of art-history books, page 27



## RESOURCES



## Happy days are here again

School reports of celebrities are among items on display at The Epiphany Society's *Happiest Days of Your Life: The Epiphany of Education* exhibition. Among the famous names entered on report forms are Roy Strong (aged 12), Peter Hall (aged 13), and David Steel (aged 12). Most of the reports mention that the pupils show promise, but they also include such comments as: "Inclined to waste time" (Strong); "Does not give of his best" (Hall); and "Shockingly untidy" (Steel).

Apart from these celebrity items, the show comprises specimens from members' collections. The Epiphany Society is concerned with "the minor transient documents of everyday life", and members exhibiting in the show include private collectors and public institutions. Among the ephemera on display is an infant's note of affection to her teacher ("I wish I wasn't coming out of your class"); a list of school rules and regulations ("No banging of anything on anything"); and an 18th-century scholastic advertisement from the collection of London's Guildhall Library ("Particular instructions given for singing Sacred Music").

The exhibition opens at the Barbican Library in London this week and runs until January 16, 1987. Outside London it can be visited during 1987 at:

- Tolson Museum, Huddersfield (Jan 2-Mar 30)
- Dorman Museum, Middlesbrough (Mar 2-Mar 30)
- Carnegie Library, Ayr (Apr 6-May 4)
- European Centre, Folk Studies, Llangollen (May 11-Jun 5)
- Gosport Museum (June 15-July 10)
- Joze Museum, Newcastle on Tyne (July 20-Aug 14)
- Russell-Cotes Museum, Bournemouth (Aug 24-Sep 18)
- Colchester & Essex Museum (Sep 28-Oct 24)

An illustrated book, *Happiest Days of Your Life*, will accompany the exhibition. Published jointly by The TES and The Epiphany Society, the book will be available from January, price £1.95 (inc p&p), from The Promotions Department, The TES, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX.



**THE ROAD DASH COLLECTION** (Tempo, three cassettes, £4.99) is a good Christmas bargain. "Revolving Rhymes" and "Dirty Beasts" (also available separately, Tempo £1.99 each) are read by Prunella Scales and Timothy West. These are packaged with "The Gruffalo and the Pelly and Me", read by Rolf Dahl himself. It's a story about unlikely window-cleaning business partners, a gruffalo, a monkey and a pelican.

The *Thin* cassettes (Liston £4.25; cassette only, £3.50) come with 62-page, large paperback. The books are particularly well produced, and the tapes capture the special *Thin* atmosphere. "The Broken Bar" and "Red Rackham's Treasure" are among the six titles.

Six 30-minute *Pantomime Story Cassettes* with illustrated paperbacks come from the same company (£1.99 book and cassette). The narration and text are lively, with Giles Brandreth, for example, reading "Jack and the Beanstalk". The *Railway Children* and *The Wizard of Oz* are two of a range of 65-minute cassettes which come with easy-to-read paperbacks (Audio Learning, £1.99). All these products provide useful reading practice as well as entertainment.

At the "Hear to Read" seminar at the National Book League in March, the discussion showed a clear need for multi-cultural cassettes. As a result, a second language have formed Side by Side, a company which produces dual-language books and cassettes. The stories are illustrated and open-ended to encourage class discussion. One side



## Are you sitting comfortably?

Rachel Redford selects tapes of stories, rhymes and songs for young listeners

"Little rabbit, come inside, you'll be safe with me."

This comes from one of the lively play-rhyme tapes which are suitable for journeys and playgroups, as well as the home. *Round and Round the Garden* (OUP £3.50, available March) comes with a book that has twelve line Beck illustrations and accompanying songs.

Many recent releases will make long-lasting Christmas presents. Pickwick's Gift Sets offer three Ladybird hardbacks with three cassettes for £5.95: *Nursery Rhymes*, *Thomas the Tank Engine*, and *Puddle Lane* are among the five sets available. The *Puddle Lane* series now offers eight titles (Pickwick, £1.99). The paperback editions of *The Tale of Jemima Puddle-duck* and *The Tale of Mrs Tittlemouse* are particularly good value, packaged with the corresponding 30-minute cassette (from Marks and Spencer only, £2.99).

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of the book and tape is in English, the other in Turkish, Urdu, Bengali or Gujarati (£2.25 tape, £1.80 book).

There are plenty of new story cassettes. Mildred Hubble is back again at Miss Cackle's Academy for Young Witches on *A Bad Spell for the Worst Witch* (Cover to Cover, £2.99). Why does Mildred's cat seem so enormous? When Mildred looks in the mirror and sees a little green cat, she understands the reason. Nasty enemy Esther has turned her into a frog... It's great fun and, being unabridged, it can be read along with the Puffin book. Similarly, *Super Measles* (Tellastory, £2.99) provides an hour of Frank Muir reading six stories about his pet possum, scruffy Afghan puppy. He dreams of being a Super-Dog and has to be rescued by a mongrel at the seaside.

Pickwick's *Dillo Series* offers over 30 titles. "Henry's Cat", "Little Old Mrs Peppercorn" and "Science Fiction Adventures" are just three recent additions (Pickwick, two cassettes, £1.99, a selection of six for £5.95). *Tempo Twists* (Tempo, two cassettes, £1.99) offer variety too, like "A Home for Jessie", a moving story of young Matt's love for the half-drowned puppy he finds in a river. Nanette Newman reads "Little Grey Rabbit".

Another in this inexpensive series, the six re-issued *Wozel Gummidge* stories (Conifer, £1.99 each) are fun and include the tea-party with Aunt Sally. William Ruston reads two hours of *Asker's the Gladiator* (LIP, two cassettes, £2.25), the story of Asterix's village hero from being thrown to the lions. Another satisfying *Asker's* is *The Adventure of Robin Hood* (LIP, two cassettes, £5.25), read by Keith Barron. *Heldi Grows Up*, a sequel to *Heldi* (LIP, two cassettes, £5.25 each), is a pleasant, gentle story. Heldi is at school and finally back with her father in the Alps.

*Scenes from Watership Down* (Conifer, £2.99) is a delightful new release, read by Roy Dotrice who differentiates between all the different rabbits' voices. *Watership Down* is still available and Conifer have reduced the price of it and of *The Hobbit* to £5.99.

The enterprising Scottish company, Whirligig, has expanded over the last year and now offers 14 Scottish story cassettes. Some come with quality paperbacks, some in library packs, some the history brought to life, reading. *The Well of the World's End* (Whirligig, £2.99; 150-page book, £1.80) contains four Scottish folk tales told with gusto and atmosphere in the appropriate Scots accent.

A welcome expansion to the cassette market has been in unabridged fiction written by some of the best contemporary writers: like *Zeus* (Kepp, Philippa Pearce) and *Zeus* (Kepp, Philippa Pearce) and *Zeus* (Kepp, Philippa Pearce).

Cover now offer over 30 titles. Margaret Mahy's *The Haunting* (CAB, three cassettes, £10.95 + VAT) is a thought-provoking story with different threads of mystery - young Barney's automatic writing and the strange presence of his dead Great Uncle.

Love *Stories* are a new venture for readers of romantic escapism. Love wins through and, in the end, the young heroine is offered marriage and happiness with her handsome hero. "Fugitive from Love" and "Parisian Romance" (WWP, £2.99 each) are two of the series of well-structured stories.

Oxford University Press have a range of stimulating and imaginative poetry books. *Poems 1* and *Poems 2*, compiled by Michael Harrison and Christopher Stuart Clark, have an accompanying cassette (OUP £5) with 42 poems, over half read by the poets themselves. These should banish the groans from primary and secondary classrooms poetry. Roger McGough makes listeners sit up with "Goodnight Nightman".

Charles Causley, master of the haunting ballad, reads several poems including "Angel Hill", and Michael Rosen makes everyday things funny, but there's a thinking edge to his lines. *Storytape 2* (OUP, £6) accompanies the finely-produced collection of stories, memories, poems and brilliant illustrations, "The Green Storyhouse" (OUP, £2.50 each). Different music, voices, rhythms and accents reflect the variety of the 17 items on the cassette. All are evocative and thoughtful, all hold the attention in the classroom - particularly, perhaps, this verse:

"Down at our school  
Things are rather funny  
Kids do all the bloody work  
And teachers get the money!"

Availability and addresses:  
Cover to Cover Cassettes Ltd, Prepost, Dene House, Lockridge, Marlborough, SN8 4EQ (school discounts available)  
Chivers Audio Books, Chivers Press, Publishers, Windsor Bridge Road, Bath, Avon BA2 3AX  
Listen Productions Ltd, 9 Biscay Road, London W6 8JW  
Oxford University Press, Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6DP  
Side by Side, 90 Palatine Road, Stoke Newington, London N16 8SY  
Whirligig, 7 Mable Street, Balerno, Edinburgh EH14 7EQ  
Cassettes are available from good book, toy and record shops. In case of difficulty contact: Hayward Promotions, 36 Wendell Road, London W12.

While living alone in the shell of Shanghai, he's captured and spends the next four years in the Japanese internment camp. This is a chilling account of human degradation and survival.

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Flying Start in British Industry

high Jobs - Tough Problems  
£8 only, £7.50 each plus VAT, or  
£10 on free loan  
JB Publications, PO Box 75, Stockport, Cheshire SK4 1PH.

These videos come under a variety of career resources recently launched by the Engineering Careers Information Service (ECIS). Both are professional in their production.

*Tomorrow's World*, John Deane's finishing touch. It's a new engineering company, with particular emphasis on the work and the range of skills and experience required. The choice of a simulator as the subject matter is a theme of the future, and is a way to gain the attention of a great number of secondary school students.

The manufacture of a flight simulator is a complex exercise, and allows for no more than 42 poems, over half read by the poets themselves. These should banish the groans from primary and secondary classrooms poetry. Roger McGough makes listeners sit up with "Goodnight Nightman".

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## High fliers

On flight for careers in engineering - Hugh Daniel reviews two programmes which show a range of opportunities

Some time could have been spent on explaining the very interesting questions posed by John Craven, such as exactly how the simulator is made to feel the same as an aircraft, how the view from the cockpit is created, how the effect of the wind beating on the windscreen is simulated, and how the sensation of acceleration is created. All these questions are posed, but no solution is offered.

Having watched the video for an enjoyable 15 minutes, you will have discovered a little more about the world of high technology and its application to an engineering product. The way into the industry will be made clear.

The choice of a simulator as the subject matter is a theme of the future, and is a way to gain the attention of a great number of secondary school students. The manufacture of a flight simulator is a complex exercise, and allows for no more than 42 poems, over half read by the poets themselves. These should banish the groans from primary and secondary classrooms poetry. Roger McGough makes listeners sit up with "Goodnight Nightman".

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frightened off by all the pipework and space station-like locations portrayed. Unlike the first video, it does make clear the possibility of apprenticeship schemes, with part or full-time study, and how young people with an engineering degree are offered a two-year training scheme by the industry.

Many students will be interested in the sequence showing the modelling of a production platform and how computer graphics are used to solve design problems. These two aspects are included in a number of syllabuses, in a less sophisticated form.

The EITB should be commended for their efforts in producing visual materials of such quality and interest. A large gap still exists between schools and industry, but this material goes some way towards bridging it. Schools should be given an opportunity to comment on it, with suggestions for further productions of a more interactive and instructional nature.

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## Sleeping rough

Think Twice, Homelessness Ain't Nice VHS, 27 mins  
Lambeth Video, 245a Coldharbour Lane, London SW9  
Moving Away from Home Shelter programme  
Resource pack contains VHS video, 40 mins; "Leaving Home" training manual for youth workers, published by WECVS; and leader's handbook, £25 inc VAT & p&p  
Available from Smith Bundy Video, 10a The Pavement, London SW4.

"I spent four months in the back of my brother's Ford Cortina eating at the fish and chip shop," a youth in Lambeth Video's *Think Twice* admits wryly. The young homeless, running away from violent, abusive or incompatible parents, seeking adventure or independence or a room of their own, are only just beginning to be news.

As their numbers grow, as a steadily reducing number of properties to rent in the public and private sectors is available, so the casualties sleeping rough assume the proportions of a social problem. They become enmeshed in prostitution and/or drugs, fall back on petty crime and end up just plain miserable. Any teacher dealing with the 15-plus age group could not do better than buy both these videos.

Shelter, as one might suppose, has produced the slicker article. A feature-

length video, with a cameo performance by Adam Faith as a charming, unscrupulous landlord, it sweeps us along in its saga of the housing dilemmas facing the members of a young pub-band. From outright sleeping rough to trouble at home or the over-priced bedsit, the story encompasses every situation from the council waiting-room to consumer fantasies in a show flat, with information on everything from rent tribunals to bed and breakfast regulations thrown in along the way. The follow-up suggestions are very thorough, with gritty anecdotal evidence to drive the point home.

"Nowhere's a rotten place to live," says the homeless singer in the Shelter video. *Think Twice* brings this out, with relentless and depressing footage of "hard to let" council flats, squats, bed and breakfast accommodation and short-stay hostels. It is less effective than the Shelter video in its use of discussion group interview with the story of homeless (black) Jenny but can be recommended for its concentration on the black and bringing out points may loose an audience which could have enjoyed discussing the issues itself. However, the Lambeth video is mandatory viewing for its firm discouragement of getting pregnant in order to get a flat: "My whole life's taken up with her; it's not worth it," says a visitor to Jenny's hotel room. That's right kids - think twice.

Victoria Neumark

## Top marks

Oral Communication: Course Work  
Copies available to local education authorities on free loan from the London and East Anglian Group for GCSE Examinations.

awarded in the first section are further skewed towards the top, with nine pupils out of 14 receiving marks of seven, eight or nine.

I was particularly concerned at one role-play exercise, based on a complaint about a pair of shoes. It was a role-play exercise, based on a complaint about a pair of shoes. It was a role-play exercise, based on a complaint about a pair of shoes.

Charles Causley, master of the haunting ballad, reads several poems including "Angel Hill", and Michael Rosen makes everyday things funny, but there's a thinking edge to his lines. *Storytape 2* (OUP, £6) accompanies the finely-produced collection of stories, memories, poems and brilliant illustrations, "The Green Storyhouse" (OUP, £2.50 each). Different music, voices, rhythms and accents reflect the variety of the 17 items on the cassette. All are evocative and thoughtful, all hold the attention in the classroom - particularly, perhaps, this verse:

"Down at our school  
Things are rather funny  
Kids do all the bloody work  
And teachers get the money!"

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The notes include the group's long-awaited record sheet for oral course work, which is identical to that used in its joint O level/GCSE examination. They also offer a selection of recommended activities and more general suggestions for classroom practice, which consider oral work in the context of an integrated approach of language development. This is constructive and reassuring advice.

John Bald

## edits

THE GOOD VIDEO GUIDE  
Issue two of "The Good Video Guide" is now out. The guide is a compilation of reviews of cultural and educational videos from a wide range of sources, from independent video-makers to television companies and large video distributors. It concentrates mainly on material ignored by the high street video libraries and peak-time broadcasts, but in demand at local level





Julie Andrews in 'Mary Poppins'



Raymond Briggs' 'The Snowman'



Tracey Ullman in 'The Young Visitors'

## Star-spangled glitter

Hugh David on television's Christmas offerings

There was a time when Muriel, Dad and their 2.4 children digested the turkey and looked forward to tea in front of the BBC's all-star Christmas pantomime. A glorious set-piece, it would have the likes of Johnny Morris, Valerie Singleton and Brian Cant, not to mention Leslie Crowther and Peter Glaze from *Crackerjack*, donning silly costumes and telling ever-so-slightly naughty jokes about

and rock fans and devotees of classic black-and-white cinema are superbly well catered for over the Christmas and New Year period.

Children first: Christmas Eve offers the youngest no less than three seasonal specials. Straight after breakfast there's *Tickle on the Tum* (ITV, 9.25am). After lunch, Channel 4 has *Pob's Christmas Special* (2.00pm), with Su Pollard reading a seasonal poem, and there's also a Christmas visit to Fiddletown, where *Supergirl* has a fight on her hands to safeguard the circus (ITV, 4.15pm). Well, it makes a change from pantomime.

And so will *The Pyrates* (December 28, BBC2, 4.00pm), an affectionate pastiche of Hollywood swashbuckling in which Capt Benjamin Avery, RN defends the fabulous crown of Madagascar from knaves, cut-throats and the latest television wizardry.

This Sunday in a special musical edition of *The Return of the Antelope*

(ITV, 3.00pm) the Lilliputians discover Christmas. On Christmas Day itself, the Whirligig Theatre Company presents a television version of David Wood's play *The Gingerbread Man* (Channel 4, 10.00am), and elsewhere in the schedules there are repeat showings of two "instant classics". Repackaged into three one-hour episodes, *The Box of Delights* returns to BBC1 (December 22 and 23, 5.00pm; December 24, 4.20pm), while *The*

once more looks set to be one of Channel 4's biggest treats.

Older children might also enjoy two Children's Film Unit productions on Channel 4. In *Daemion* (December 22, 2.30pm) the supernatural hits suburban life. In *Swallowtail* (Boxing Day, 9.30am) the setting is a choir school, but mystery and suspense lurk behind the madrigals.

Also worth a look is *Swallows* (December 27, BBC2, 8.35pm), a gentle story about a group of wartime evacuees sent to a North Wales village whose inhabitants speak a language they cannot understand. English viewers will immediately empathize, for the play is largely in Welsh.

Older children will also find much to their taste in the many hours of rock music on all four channels this Christmas. Quito apart from the five-and-a-half hour marathon *86 White Heat* (December 31, BBC2, 7.00pm) with Sting, Jean-Michel Jarre and a 1973 recording of David Bowie's final live concert, there's what the advance listings call "real magic" from *Queen* (January 2, Channel 4, 5.30pm) as well as raw memories of *Dylan* (January 2, BBC2, 9.00pm), *Tina Turner* (December 28, ITV, 10.15pm), *Eric Clapton and Friends* (Christmas Day, Channel 4, 11.10pm) and much, much more.

At the other end of the musical spectrum, this viewer anyway will be muzzling the cat and repositioning the speakers for a simultaneous stereo broadcast of *Madama Butterfly* (December 28, BBC2/Radio 3, 7.15pm) - a recording of La Scala, Milan's Kabuki-style production, conducted by Lorin Maazel.

He'll also be buying videotape by the mile for, though there aren't any really big films over the holiday period - apart perhaps from *Flashdance* (December 27, ITV, 10.45pm), *Splash* (December 28, BBC2, 9.45pm), the quirky *Tootsie* (December 28, BBC1, 7.30pm) and *Educating Rita* (Christmas Day, BBC1, 10.40pm), which has Michael Caine, Julie Walters and a very good score - there are gems among the also-rans which offer hours of entertainment for long winter evenings.

Included in the BBC2 Silent Classics season are *The Mark of Zorro* (December 22, 12.00), the first of the genuine swashbucklers, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (December 24, 12.30pm) and *Lon Chaney in the greatest of the many versions of The Phantom of the*

*Opera* (December 23, 12.50pm). From the same era comes the latest of the Thames Silents: Harry Langdon in a newly-lit print of *The Strong Man* (December 24, Channel 4, 3.30pm). Like previous films in the series, the accompanying score has been specially composed by Carl Davis.

Best of the rest: a personal and almost randomly-selected 10 of no less than 163 feature films and made-for-TV movies to be broadcast between December 20 and January 2. There's *New York, New York* (December 29, Channel 4, 9.00pm) and Brando and Sinatra celebrating the same city in *Guys and Dolls* (December 23, Channel 4, 8.30pm). Marilyn Monroe is absolutely unmissable in *Some Like It Hot* (Boxing Day, BBC2, 10.05pm), while *The Son of the Sheik* (December 27, Channel 4, 9.25am) was Rudolph Valentino's last film. Children in particular will love Disney's *Dumbo* (Christmas Day, ITV, 3.10pm), *The Railway Children* (December 28, BBC1, 4.40pm), *The Young Visitors* (sic, December 22, Channel 4, 8.30pm) and that old favourite *Mary Poppins* (January 1, BBC1, 2.30pm). Neither will repeats of both *2001: A Space Odyssey* (December 20, BBC2, 11.50am) and *Star Wars* (January 1, ITV, 1.15pm) go unwatched.

In among all the holly, something approaching a normal service is being maintained by all four channels over

the next two weeks. If you look hard enough, there are programmes with absolutely no Christmas connection. BBC2 rediscovered the American cartoon-strip heroine Betty Boop, for instance, in two programmes, *Boop-Oop-a-Doop!* (December 21, 3.00pm) and *The Romance of Betty Boop* (December 30, 6.50pm). BBC1 gets momentarily "serious" when John Craven and Nick Ross present *It's Not Just Zorro* (December 30, 5.35pm), a *Newsround* *Drugwatch* special, forcing the need to "just say no".

There are also the reviews of the year, *Fergie, Chernobyl, Westland, AIDS and Cory Aquino* should occupy most of *Newsnight's 1986: Review of the Year* (December 29, BBC1, 10.25pm) and *ITN's 86: Review of the Year* (December 30, ITV, 11.00pm). Then there's Barry Norman's selection of *Films of the Year* (December 30, BBC1, 11.05pm), and the hits of '86 in *the Top of the Pops Christmas Party* (Christmas Day, BBC1, 2.00pm). The *Blue Peter Review of the Year* (December 29, BBC1, 5.00pm) will carry stories on the arrival of Bonny, Wilf, Mark Curry and Caron Keating, as well as a visit from Kermil the frog! And finally, on Christmas Eve, as you wrap the last of the presents and Russell puts the mince pies in the oven for *Harty's Christmas Party* (BBC2, 10.50pm), BBC2 presents an all-star cast in *Alan Ayckbourn's Christmas play, Season's Greetings* (9.00pm).



Patrick Troughton in 'Box of Delights'

## Pictures and conversations

Michael Clarke on this year's additions to the art-history shelf

school days, Emile Zola, to provide an adequate account of the painter's work or its development.

Rewald lets us know what Cézanne possibly learned from Pissarro but what he could have learned at the Ecole Special et Gratuite des Dessins in Aix-en-Provence, we are not told. The teaching at this provincial school, like the superior, metropolitan, Ecole des Beaux-Arts is not explained. The reader is left to sense their association with artists who "succeeded in hiding their pettiness and poverty of spirit behind an academic correctness devoid of life," and with art that was "the negation of nature." Rewald may "let the facts speak for themselves" but he stops short of bringing "the reader into direct contact with (all) the historic evidence."

Wagner is so concerned to deal with the standard training received by an aspiring sculpture student, and to show how Carpeaux transcended this self-perpetuating system, that she relegates biographical interest to a few pages at the back of the book. For her, the principal task was "to explain in terms other than the triumph of 'genius' Carpeaux's success from worker's son to eminent sculptor." No satisfactory explanation of how this indisputably talented artist achieved creative originality and state patronage could be given using Rewald's polarization of avant-garde and academic art.

Far from being a misunderstood genius, Carpeaux was a calculating, ambitious man who switched from one teacher to another more likely to help him win the coveted Prix de Rome and, when he did achieve success, promptly commercialized his art by manufacturing statues in large quantities. Yet he was also a vigorous draughtsman (the development of his ideas through the notebook drawings is one of the many fine things in the book) and, on several occasions, brought a liberating originality to mid-19th-century sculpture.

Manet was another liberating artist of genius who also sought official honours but Kathleen Adler's monograph (Manet, Phaidon £39.50, 0 7148 236010) steers a middle course between the approaches of Rewald and Wagner. Very much aware of the conflict of views on this decidedly enigmatic painter, she is able to make up her own mind, profitably pursuing a parallel between Flaubert's "Uses of uncertainty," and Manet's persistent ambiguities.

Manet's early education under couture preparing us for the later lessons learned from Velasquez, followed by an account of his exhibition strategy before "The History Paintings" lead us into "A Complete Vision of Contemporary Life." En route, Adler succeeds in laying to rest a few myths, like Manet the arch-formalist, indifferent

to his subjects and bereft of social or political content, as well as reconciling the paradox of a man who could paint four versions of the Emperor, Maximilian "Execution of the Emperor, Maximilian" and yet hope to be rewarded with the Legion d'honneur.

These books by Wagner and Adler, however, do not mean an end to the romanticization of the artist, as Edward Lucie-Smith's *Lives of the Great Twentieth Century Artists* (Weidenfeld and Nicholson £20.00, 0 397 78884 1) shows. He believes that "Biography has increasingly tended to separate itself from the mainstream of contemporary historical writing," and appears to accept this trend. So much so that his potted careers of mostly dead painters and sculptors, gathered together under the largely predictable labels of groups and movements, are illustrated with up to three photographs of the artists but not always one of their work.

Yet he chooses not to use any of the 500 or more photographs of the American painter, Georgia O'Keeffe, taken by her photographer and avant-garde gallery-director husband, Alfred Stieglitz. Even more unexpectedly, O'Keeffe's latest biographer, Jan Gardner Castro (*The Art and Life of Georgia O'Keeffe*, Virago Press £20.00, 0 086068 737 6), uses only two in a book that is clearly meant to promote an already growing cult. In this, it will probably succeed. The many finely reproduced paintings will please the artist's admirers, attract new ones and give encouragement to young painters on the threshold of

of art students, however, will be dissatisfied with a text that describes the pictures instead of offering a serious analysis of their content and meaning.

No one could accuse John Elderfield of not taking his subject seriously (Morris Louis, Museum of Modern Art New York/Thames and Hudson £28.50, 0 87070 418 4) but although he spends more time placing Louis in the context of his time than Castro does O'Keeffe, he too avoids any direct explanation of a painting's meaning.

Two rigorously formalist for that, he provides a minutely detailed account of technical and compositional development and leaves interpretation to the kind of generalization quoted on the book's cover: "Louis's Vells, Unfurled and Stripes allude to these elements: to water, to air, and to fire, and to the light that makes them visible to us."

Tony Godfrey's account of recent avant-garde painting (*The New Image: Painting in the 1980s*, Phaidon £19.50, 0 7148 2403 8) is full of unsupported generalizations, "New Painting... is a reaction against the decadence of late-capitalist culture." It is "Aggres-

sive, anti-formalist and eclectic." Most of the artists... actively oppose the shallow and deceit of a complacent and decayed society," declares Godfrey's admission that "it is indisputable that the current reputations of many New Painters is grossly inflated." This is neither good journalism nor good art history.

Unfortunately, a good deal of this hyperbole and false glamour has passed from fine artists to designers but Adrian Forty (*Objects of Desire: Design and Society 1750-1990*, Thames and Hudson £12.95, 0 500 23453 1) will have none of it. Set against the claim of design historian Stephen Bayley that "Industrial design is the art of the 20th century", Forty shows with abundant documentary evidence that "whatever degree of artistic imagination is lavished upon the design of objects, it is done not to give expression to the designer's creativity and imagination but to make the products saleable and profitable."

Rejecting the three prejudices that he regards as having dominated and distorted design history - the autonomy of the designer, the aesthetic appreciation of objects and the assumption that form follows function - Forty argues that "the act of selecting the design to be manufactured is just as important a design decision as any performed by the designer, but it is one that he is not empowered to take himself." That decision is taken by the manufacturer, whether it be Josiah Wedgwood opting for 18th-century neoclassicism or British Leyland discarding half a dozen prototypes before settling for the Mini-Metro design.

For Forty, "the history of design is the history of societies: any account of change must rest upon an understanding of how design affects and is affected by the processes of modern economies," but Simon Jervis in his catalogue of Furniture of About 1990 from Austria and Hungary in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Victoria and Albert Museum £20.00, 0 948107 48 0) has nothing of significance to say about the complex Austro-Hungarian

society that generated the pieces he illustrates. He does, nevertheless, list the manufacturers, going beyond the exclusive Wiener Werkstätte and the exceptional Thonet family to little-known cabinet makers.

In the heyday of 19th-century British industrial expansion, Godwin designed textiles, wallpapers and furniture for several manufacturers but the part they played in the final product is no more explored in Elizabeth Aslin's otherwise welcome book (*E W Godwin: Furniture and Interior Decoration*, John Murray £15.00, 0 7195 4267 7) than it is in Jervis's essay. Concentrating on the development of Godwin's work from Neogothic and Japanese influences to his extraordinarily spare designs of the 1870s, her well-illustrated account is as nicely laid out as any Aesthetic Movement designer could have wished.

As a designer who bridges the gap between unique, hand-crafted items and industrial mass-production, Robert Welch (*Hand and Machine*, Lund and Humphries £25.00, 0 951085 50 6) might have been expected to discuss just those aspects of design raised by Forty but for all its value to art historians and design students, this is too conventional a book to provide any revelations. Welch is steeped in the Arts and Crafts Movement ideology, he lives and works in the Cotswolds and begins his autobiography with the example set by his mother's drawings and paintings done when she was a student at Hereford School of Art.

Nevertheless, craft and design technology students will find a great deal to learn from Welch's text as well as the many preliminary sketches, presentation drawings, plans, elevations and cross-sections that imply the photographs of the finished pieces. However reticent he is on the manufacturing process, he is a true craftsman, sensitive to the materials he uses and well-able to explain his working methods. If this book does not find its way on to every craft library shelf, it ought to be in every metal workshop.



Gustav Klimt with his cat in the garden in Josephine Stieglitz Strasse, Vienna c.1915. The smock he wears was his usual working costume. From Lives of the Great Twentieth Century Artists.

## briefings

radio & tv

### General interest

**TALKING TO WRITERS:** (Monday, 22 Dec 18.30 C4) R.K. Narayan, India's best-known writer, talks about his life and work.

**ELEVENTH HOUR: TURN IT UP** (Monday, 22 Dec 23.15 C4) A selection of films made by and about young people. "Girl Zone" investigates agony aunts. "Here to Stay" is about racism in East London, and "Despite the Sun" looks at the News International dispute.

**VLADIMIR HOROWITZ** (Wednesday, 24 Dec 14.40 BBC2) (Thursday, 25 Dec 19.20 C4) Channel 4's portrait of Horowitz centres on a recital in his New York studio and is preceded by BBC2's "Horowitz in Moscow". The 82-year-old pianist is filmed giving a concert in Russia for the first time in 60 years.

**HANNIBAL'S FOOTSTEPS** (Monday 29 Dec-1 Jan, 18.25 C4) Bernard Levin retraces the route Hannibal took across the Alps from Montpelier to Turin.

**ST NICOLAS** (Wednesday, 24 Dec 22.45 C4) A performance of Benjamin Britten's Cantata sung by the Wandsworth School Choir and the girls of St Alban's High School in St Alban's Cathedral.

**GLORIANA** (Thursday, 25 Dec 15.00 C4) English National Opera performs Britten's opera based on "Elizabeth and Essex" by Lytton Strachey. Originally written to commemorate the Coronation in 1953, this film stars Sarah Walker as Elizabeth and Anthony Rolfe Johnson as Essex.

**MADAMA BUTTERFLY** (Sunday, 28 Dec 19.15 BBC2) A predominantly oriental production of Puccini's opera filmed at La Scala. Japanese producer Kenta Asari used two Japanese singers as the female leads and a Japanese team for the design and costumes.



# Classified Advertisements

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Masters/Mistresses 28  
Remedial and Special Needs  
Teaching Posts 28  
Computer Studies 28  
Economics & Business Studies 28

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**DETAILS:** The Director, In Service Training, 14 St. George's, London W1. Tel: 01-403 9975. (05043) 760000

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